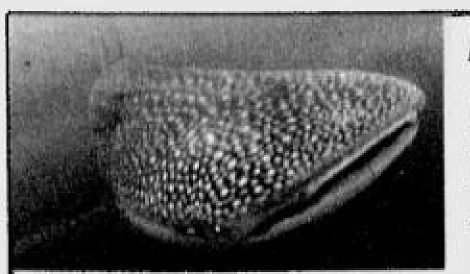


ACROSS / A17

Double treat:
Mayon plus whale sharks

BUSINESS / B1

GSIS sells 12.7%
stake in EPCIB for P8.7 billion

ACROSS / A15

100 GIs held
at Zamboanga immigration

METRO / A19

Graft raps filed
at Sandiganbayan vs Binay, 10 others

Menthol cigarettes give stronger hit but deadlier

MAG-MENTHOL CANDY NA LANG KAYO!

CHICAGO—SMOKERS of menthol cigarettes find it harder to quit than those smoking regular cigarettes, according to a new research released early this week.

This may explain why

MENTHOL/A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, September 28, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 292 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Sun lights up Zambo village even at night

By Blanche S. Rivera

KALAWIT, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE—AFTER decades of darkness, residents of Barangay Marcelo in this remote town 187 kilometers southwest of the provincial capital would not have to spend P120 for a "habal-habal" (motorcycle) to take them to the nearest store selling kerosene.

SUN LIGHTS/A10

'Milenyo' heads for Metro; no classes

By Alcuin Papa, Blanche S. Rivera and Inquirer Southern Luzon and Visayas

PREPARING FOR HEAVY RAINS SPAWNED by Typhoon "Milenyo" (international name: Xangsane), the Department of Education suspended classes today in all elementary and high schools in Metro Manila.

In an advisory, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus yesterday said that classes were also suspended in Bulacan, Laguna, Batangas, Cavite and Rizal provinces.

The Commission on Higher Education has yet to announce the suspension of classes in the college level.

Classes in all levels were already suspended yesterday in Legazpi City. As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the eye of the storm was spotted 50 kilometers east of the city.

Lapus said elementary and high school classes in Metro Manila and five provinces were suspended on the recommendation of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

"Since 1995, there has been no strong typhoon that has crossed this close to Manila," Nathaniel Cruz, the chief weather forecaster, told reporters, after the capital's alert level was raised.

Milenyo gained strength when it made landfall in Catarman, Northern Samar, early morning yesterday before blowing into Bicol, where hundreds of passengers were stranded and sea voyage was stopped.

Traveling west northwest with winds of 130 km per hour near the center and gusts of up to 150 kph, Milenyo was spotted by Pagasa in the vicinity of Sorsogon.

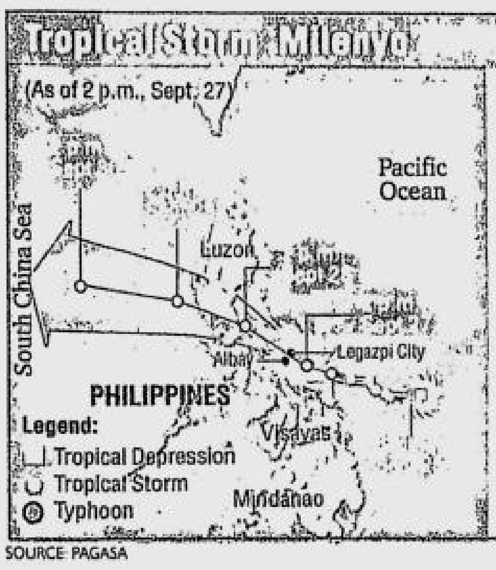
"The typhoon is now south of Bicol, and our models suggest that it will traverse the south of Manila, meaning Cavite, Laguna, etc.," Cruz said.

Milenyo is expected to be 110 km east of Metro Manila this afternoon.

'MILENYO'/A10

Tropical Storm Milenyo

(As of 2 p.m., Sept. 27)



Location of eye/center - 50 km east of Legazpi City, Albay (13.0°N, 124.3°E)

Strength
Maximum sustained winds of 130 kph near the center gustiness of up to 160 kph

Signal No. 3
Luzon
Sorsogon, Catanduanes, Camarines provinces, Southern Quezon, Polillo Island, Marinduque, Masbate, Albay, Burias Island, Ticao Island
Visayas
Samar provinces

INQMAP: L.A. MISTADES

SOURCE: PAGASA

GMA orders retake of nursing exams

DOLE, PRC to thresh out details of new tests today

By Christine O. Avendaño

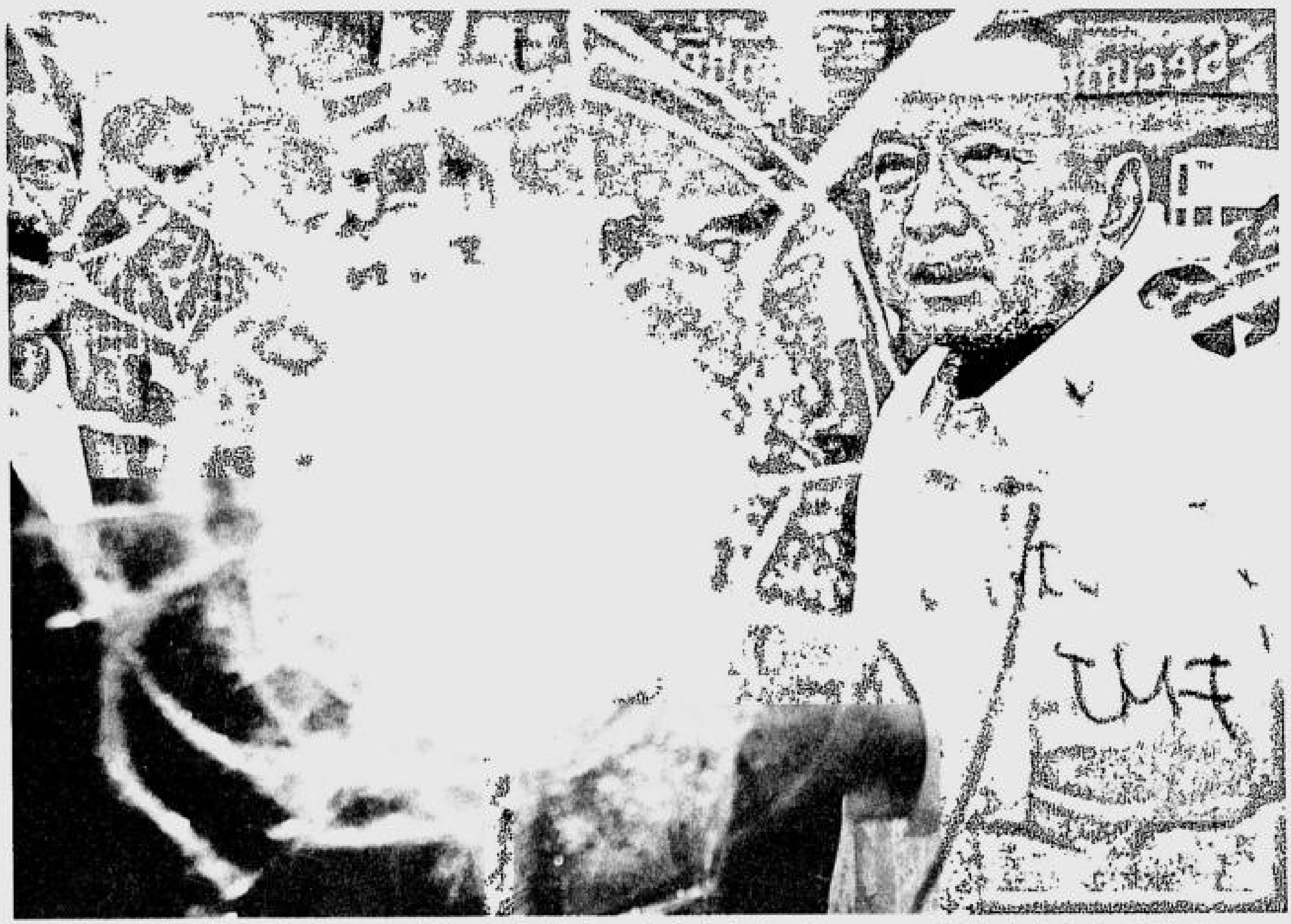
PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has ordered the retake of the June nursing board examination to redeem the image of Filipino nurses here and abroad, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced yesterday.

Ermita said Labor Secretary Arturo Brion was to meet today with officials of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to discuss the details of the retake of the exam that was marred by a leakage of test questions.

He also said Ms Arroyo had assigned the supervision of the PRC to the Department of Labor and Employment. Prior to the leakage controversy, the PRC was attached to the Office of the President. *(See related story on Page A8.)*

"As to whether it will be a retake of

GOV'T ORDERS/A8



CRACKED GLASS. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita inspects the bullet marks on a security-laminated glass during a Wednesday conference on business and counterterrorism in Manila. AP

Cha-cha bid's fate rests on 5 areas

By Armand N. Nocum and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE FATE OF CHARTER CHANGE through a people's initiative now rests on five legislative districts where the groups Sigaw ng Bayan and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) reportedly failed to secure the required signatures of at least 3 percent of the registered voters in each district.

Toward the end of the more than nine hours of oral arguments at the Supreme Court on Tuesday night, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban ordered the Charter change proponents to show proof that this constitutional requirement had been met.

"If it is true that the 3-percent minimum requirement was not reached even in one congressional district, it will be the end of the petition [for Charter change through a people's initiative] and will be dismissed," Panganiban told Bernardo Pardo, lawyer of Sigaw and a former chair of the Commission on Elections.

"All parties are given 15 days from today (Tuesday) to submit memoranda whether the 3 percent was reached in all legislative districts in the country. After 15 days, the issue is deemed submitted for decision with or without the memoranda," the Chief Justice said.

Thus, he said, the concerned parties were required to prove their case "according to the best documents in their possession."

Sigaw and Ulap's purported failure to meet the 3-percent requirement was raised by former South Cotabato Rep. Lualhati

CHA-CHA BID'S/A8

Bolante: US using me as pawn to free 4 US Marines

By Philip C. Tubeza

FORMER AGRICULTURE UNDERSECRETARY Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante has accused the US government of using him as a "pawn" to secure the release of four American Marines accused of raping a 23-year-old Filipino woman at the Subic Bay Freeport last year.

To support his contention, Bolante submitted to the Wisconsin district court hearing his habeas corpus petition a copy of an INQUIRER report on Sept. 16 on a claim by the alleged rape victim's mother that the head of the prosecution team had proposed a settlement with the accused Marines.

"Counsels for petitioner have discovered additional information demonstrating that Bolante is likely being used as a

BOLANTE/A8

Gov't rejects MILF demand for bigger ARMM

ROGER MARGALLO

SENATE President Manny Villar gestures shortly after the Commission on Appointments approved the promotion of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon on Wednesday. (Story on Page A2.)

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY REjected a demand by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to expand a Muslim autonomous region without holding a referendum, raising prospects of a prolonged impasse in peace talks.

The government remains firm in its position that the region cannot be expanded unless residents in affected areas approve the move in a plebiscite, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Malaysian-brokered talks between the government and the MILF, the largest Muslim group fighting for self-rule in the southern Philippine's, hit a snag early this month over the issue.

The MILF wants to include 613 Muslim-dominated barangays in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao without any plebiscite.

"We will stand pat on our position that we must follow the constitutional process," Ermita told reporters a day after government negotiators and Cabinet security officials agreed on the position.

MILF chair Murad Ibrahim has blamed the government for the stalled talks and warned that negotiations could collapse if the government does not take them seriously.

GOV'T REJECTS/A10

MILF Chair Murad Ibrahim meets rebel commanders in Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat on Monday. AFP

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Bicol Region will experience stormy weather. The rest of Visayas and the rest of Southern Luzon will have rains and gusty winds and the coastal waters along these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of the country will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/09/27/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Stormy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Stormy
Clark Zone	Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Stormy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Stormy .	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

RP to miss safe water target

INDIA AND CHINA ARE LIKELY to meet UN-set targets for access to safe drinking water by 2015, but four other Asian nations are expected to fail, the Asian Development Bank said Wednesday.

Indonesia is on course to miss the safe water target as well as a UN goal for improved sanitation, while Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam may meet sanitation needs but not the water target, the Manila-based lender said.

In 2000, world leaders agreed to a set of Millennium Development Goals that included cutting in half by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and improved sanitation.

In 2002, about 700 million people in the Asia-Pacific region were still without safe water supplies and some two billion had inadequate or no toilet facilities, the bank said. Since then investments to address the problems have fallen seriously behind demands across the region, it said.

ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda noted at the opening of a two-day conference Tuesday that improvements on other UN development indicators, including income levels, hunger, communicable diseases, maternal and child mortality rates and environmental sustainability, "all have one factor in common: water."

"Water has become everyone's business, and therefore a national development issue" that requires coordination and leadership, not only of the water sector but also finance and planning agencies, civil society, the private sector and development institutions, he said.

The conference, which brings together officials and experts from India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam, aims to accelerate water investments in the countries by identifying barriers to investments and ways to overcome them. The investments would provide 200 million people with safe drinking water and improved sanitation, it said. *AP*

Double victory for Esperon

Jinggoy no show at hearing; AFP chief admits meeting with senator

By TJ Burgonio

FINALLY, HE CAN WEAR HIS four stars to any official function without raising eyebrows.

In a surprising turn of events, Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon yesterday breezed through the Commission on Appointments without any objections being posed, getting confirmation for his three- and four-star ranks in one day.

Esperon's hitch-free "double confirmation" came about after opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada failed to show up at the CA caucus and plenary, and withdrew his motion to question Esperon on his alleged role in the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

Esperon admitted that he had "exploratory talks" with Estrada a few days ago.

"There's nothing really that was bad between us. We had been friends. I intend to respect him. We understand each other," he said of Estrada.

With the lone senator opposing Esperon out of the way, members of the CA defense committee agreed at a caucus to confirm his appointment and promotion to the rank of lieutenant-general, and to full general at a later plenary session.

Only the AFP chief's appointment to three-star rank was on the agenda of yesterday's plenary. Up until the caucus started, his fate was uncertain.

Opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III earlier threatened to invoke Section 20 of the CA rules at the plenary, during which legislators are given the privilege to defer appointments without explanation or question, if Estrada asked him to do so.

During the caucus of the CA defense committee, however, Osmeña rose to inform the body that Estrada had called to say he was withdrawing his objection because he could not find the time to attend the session as he had to attend to a son who was stricken with dengue.

Senate President Manuel Villar and Rep. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo, chair of the defense committee, defended the body's decision to confirm Esperon's twin appointments at the same time even though only his promotion to three-star rank was on the agenda.

No big deal

"It was the consensus of the members of the Commission on Appointments that it was time to confirm the generals and colonels. Since there was no more objection, everything was clear for their confirmation. There's no big deal about this confirmation," Villar said.

"There were no more impediments. Why let him be bypassed?" added Romualdo.

Esperon was promoted to three-star rank in August 2005. He was bypassed when Congress adjourned in early June after Estrada and Osmeña signified that they intended to interrogate him at the resumption of sessions in late July.

He took over the top AFP post on July 21, a position that carries four-star rank.

"I'm so happy with this double confirmation. I was expecting to be confirmed as lieutenant general but the Commission on Appointments has so graciously given me the fourth star and I sincerely thank them," an exuberant Esperon told reporters.

A total of 64 other senior officials, including 15 generals, were also confirmed.

'What can I do?'

Estrada later said: "What can I do? It's the majority who confirmed him."

He said he had "nothing against" the AFP chief and that he had only wanted to ask him some questions on the wiretapping scandal.

In June 2005, wiretaps surfaced that purportedly showed President Macapagal-Arroyo and then Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano conspiring to rig the results of the 2004 presidential vote. Esperon was one of the military officials implicated in the fraud.

Esperon himself credited Estrada, among others, for his smooth confirmation. He said the talks with the senator had been arranged by a mutual friend.

"I don't think I have to convince anybody," he said when asked how he convinced Estrada to withdraw his motion.

"We took this up based on enlightened discussion and willingness to accommodate each other," he said.

Estrada confirmed meeting with Esperon, and said he was satisfied with the general's explanation that he had no hand in the fraud allegedly perpetrated in the 2004 elections.

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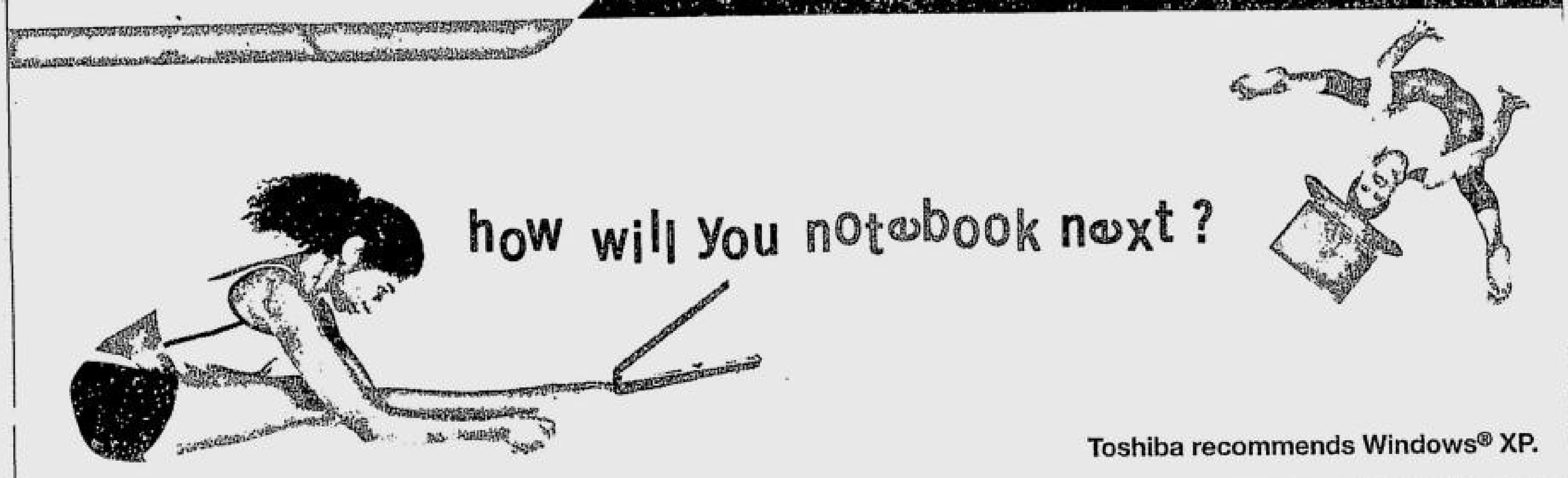
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Ermita to Defensor: Don't talk too much

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PRESIDENT'S PET CABINET official should not talk too much, according to the "Little President."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he has advised Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor to be more circumspect about political matters "because he is very popular and anything that comes from him is picked up by media."

Ermita said he told Defensor not to "make any more statements because these are diverting away from our agenda."

Defensor took the advice good-naturedly. The two just laughed and joked about it, said Ermita.

"But I repeated my message to him not to talk so much," he said.

"I don't think he's asking me to shut up. He's just worried that every time I sneeze, all of them are affected," said Defensor, who often functions as the President's spokesperson in rebutting opposition attacks.

Ermita cited Defensor's announcement a few weeks ago that retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan was being considered for deputy security adviser.

Ermita was forced to issue a denial as it was Palparan's colleague, retired Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, who was picked by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the post.

Ermita was again forced to make a denial a few days ago to correct the misimpression caused by Defensor's announcement that several Cabinet officials were planning to run for the Senate next year.

"His statements are his personal opinion. I am not interested in running for senator and I have no intention. He just mentioned us as those being considered and he took it out of thin air," Ermita said.

He noted that the others that Defensor mentioned as being possible administration senatorial candidates like Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya had to come out to deny having such ambitions.

He said the government could not be seen to be making plans for the senatorial elections when it was actively campaigning for a shift to a parliamentary system.

"For me, this is not the time to talk about the political line-up in next year's elections. But I thank him [Defensor] for not forgetting me when he floated names of possible senatorial candidates for the administration," Ermita said.

In yet another controversial statement, Defensor last Tuesday said that Malacañang was seriously considering freezing the assets of jailed ex-President Estrada to prevent him from using the funds to bankroll destabilization plots.

Ermita said there was no such freeze order.

Airports may ease security measures

THE UNITED STATES' decision to relax its ban on liquids and gels has moved the country's aviation security officers to review the security protocol in the Philippines.

Office of the Transportation Security Cecilio Penilla told the INQUIRER that he has received a call from the US Transportation Security Administration on the relaxing of US restrictions.

He stressed that there are no plans to relax Philippine security protocols so far but aviation security officials will meet with airline representatives to review the measures.

The Philippines had followed expanded security measures worldwide, which included disallowing hand-carried liquids and gels on all domestic and international flights, last month following a foiled bombing plot in Britain to use liquid explosives on US-bound airliners.

Recently, however, airline operators expressed support for relaxed restrictions in order to lessen inconvenience to passengers. They assured aviation officials that individual airline operators observe their own security measures on top of those being implemented in the country's airports.

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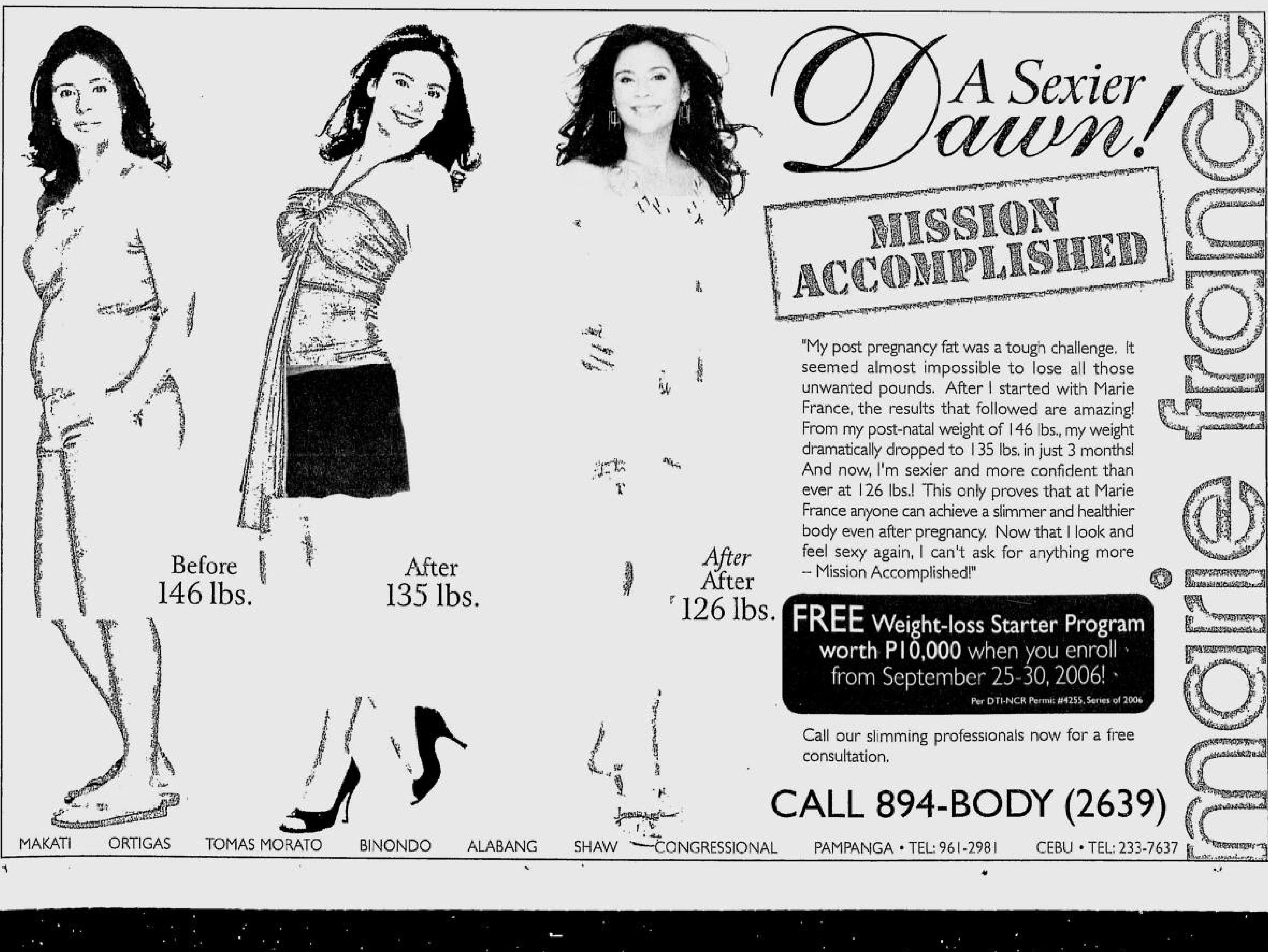

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DOH tops anti-corruption list; BIR is 4th

THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-corruption report card for the first semester of the year gave the Department of Health top honors for its anti-corruption efforts, while the worst marks went to the Department of Justice.

Others in the top 10 among 70 agencies monitored by the the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) were: the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Science and Technology, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Department of Trade and Industry, Office of the President, Department of Education, Department of Public Works and Highways, the Philippine National Police and the Metro Manila Development Authority.

At the bottom were the DOJ, the Department of Tourism, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Immigration.

The PAGC integrity evaluation program is being held in connection with the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific of the Asian Development Bank and the 27-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has made good governance one of its priority concerns.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag told the INQUIRER he was particularly proud of the BIR's fourth place standing because it was the first time the tax collection agency ever appeared in the top 10, breaking its long-perceived reputation as one of the most corrupt agencies in government.

Buñag noted that the BIR exceeded its collection goal during the first six months of this year. He attributed this to their successful tax collection strategies, as well as to the infusion of honesty and integrity in the tax collection functions.

Buñag has also launched a program to improve customer service in the bureau and to arouse greater tax consciousness among the people through intensified tax education.

To improve tax collections, the BIR launched several action plans, including profiling and benchmarking of industries, intensification of collection, more rigid surveillance of business tax compliance, implementation of the computer-assisted audit program in regional offices, tax mapping operations and incentives to taxpayers for full compliance with tax laws and regulations.

Cynthia D. Balana

ROADMAP TO ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY Series 3

**Good News for the Filipino Consumers:
An Advance Merry Christmas in September**

Weekly Oil Price Rollbacks, NO Transport Fare Hike, Prices of Basic Commodities & Electricity Rates to Remain Stable

Based on the decision of OPEC member countries to sustain their current oil production levels of 28 million barrels, even though demand is slowing and inventories are growing, the Consumer & Oil Price Watch (**COPW**) sees weekly rollbacks in the prices of petroleum products in the coming months.

In addition, non-OPEC member countries are producing more and many countries like the Philippines are looking at alternatives to crude oil like ethanol, geothermal, hydro, wind power, coal, natural gas, & bio-diesel.

COPW is optimistic that with the strengthening of the peso, electricity rates will stabilize, prices of basic commodities will not increase, and there will be no increase in transport fares.

Despite this good news, we should not be too complacent as the Philippines could be on the verge of another power crisis.

Our current power facilities are old, antiquated, and obsolete. They cannot sustain the increasing demand for power. As it is, we may be experiencing rotating brownouts as early as the summer of 2008, when the hydro-power plants are at their lowest level.

To make things worse, the 600 MW Mirant Sual (Pangasinan) coal-fired plant broke down and will take **6 to 8 MONTHS to REPAIR**. This coincided with the scheduled maintenance of one unit of the 700 MW Mirant Pagbilao (Quezon) coal-fired power plant. This forced NPC to run power plants using the **more expensive bunker fuel and diesel plants resulting in the increase in WESM (Wholesale Electricity Spot Market) prices.**

Thus, COPW urges Congress & the Office of the President to amend the EPIRA Law (RA 9136), before Congress goes on recess on December 15, in order to avert another power crisis.

These amendments will allow more foreign investments to bring in the much needed capital to build NEW power plants to generate the additional **4,438 MW** power requirements up to 2010.

COPW proposes the following essential amendments to the EPIRA Law:

1. **For Congress to privatize TRANSCO by granting the winning bidder a 25-year congressional franchise to operate.**
2. **For Congress to lower the required privatization of NPC assets from 70% to 50%. *Today, ONLY 19.5 % of the NPC power plants are privatized.***
3. **Make the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) *truly independent* so that decisions will NOT be subject to review by the courts.**
4. **Amend the NPC Charter (RA 8395) to *remove the NPC exemption from the payment of taxes.* This will bring the total installed capacity whose income tax holidays will expire on December 2006 to 83% and on December 2008 to 95% of installed capacity.**
5. **For Congress & the Senate to review & pass the following Bills before Congress adjourns on December 15th, namely:**
   - **BioFuels Act - Senate Bill No. 2226 & House Bill No. 4629.**
   - **House Bill No. 5515 - the Downstream Natural Gas Industry Development Act of 2006.**
   - **Senate Bill No. 2411- An Act Harmonizing the Grant & Administration of Fiscal & NON-Fiscal Incentives.**
   - **House Bill on Fiscal Incentives.**

COPW will meet with DOF, DOE, PSALM, TRANSCO & NPC officials to request for an update on the Credit Suisse First Boston (CPSB) and Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV/AA) on the electricity industry restructuring to the Senate Energy Committee, on September 15, 2000, in the light that the conditions six years ago have significantly changed.

The COPW will submit its position paper to the House and Senate Committees on Energy and the Committee on Ways and Means chairmen on the above mentioned Bills in the Week of October 6th.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/

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Jinggoy fumes over Palace plan to freeze Erap assets

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEN. JINGGOY ESTRADA YESTERDAY BEwailed Malacañang's reported plan to freeze more assets of his detained father, President Joseph Estrada, to prevent him from funding destabilization attempts against the Arroyo administration.

"Let me put on record that my father has no plans of destabilizing this government. We have never been involved in destabilizing this government because it is already destabilizing itself," Jinggoy said in a speech in the Senate.

He said Malacañang's plan was "very, very unfair."

"Why is it that every time this administration commits blunders, they always blame my father?" he said. "President Estrada is living a very quiet life in Tanay, raising ducks and fishing."

Jinggoy said his mother, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada, said their assets have already been frozen after his father was charged with plunder.

"What assets is he talking about?" Jinggoy asked of Presidential Chief of Staff Michael "Mike" Defensor.

"I think he is barking up the wrong tree," Jinggoy said.

Water execs meet

SOME 250 GENERAL MANAGERS AND board directors from 42 water districts in Northern Mindanao will meet today in Surigao City to discuss water supply issues.

The 24th Northern Mindanao Water Information Council Forum is hosted by the Surigao Metropolitan Water District, which was named 2005 water district of the year.

The forum will coincide with the inauguration of a P205-million modernization project of the Surigao water district funded by the Japan Bank of International Cooperation and the Philippine government through the Local Water Utilities Administration, according to Benjamin Ensomo Jr., general manager of the Surigao water district.

Ensomo said the project includes construction of dam intake, 52.5 kilometers of distribution lines, a 3,000 cubic-meter underground reservoir and a booster pump station.

Corrections

IN EARLY EDITIONS OF THE SEPT. 27 ISsue, the front-page banner story carried the erroneous headline—"4 justices question Cha-cha signatures." The story mentioned only three—not four—Supreme Court justices who questioned the authenticity of the 6.3 million signatures gathered by Charter change groups.

* * *

In the Sept. 21 issue, a story on Page A5—"Satur, AFP chief face off at budget hearing"—misspelled the name of the national security adviser. The correct spelling of the national security adviser's name is Norberto Gonzales—not Gonzalez.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, September 28, 2006
San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companions,
Martyrs
Wenceslaus

1st Reading: Eccl 1:2-11
Gospel: Luke 9:7-9

King Herod heard of all that Jesus was doing and did not know what to think, for people said, "This is John, raised from the dead." Others believed that Elijah or one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. As for Herod, he said, "I had John beheaded; who is this man about whom I hear such wonders?" And he was anxious to see him.

Commentary

Folk wisdom that sounds like Zen sayings: woe, everything passes away; all things are wearisome, back to circling around. Nothing new on earth, nothing remembered. A bit bleak. But such a description of life describes the one who says these things and their belief or lack of it, not life itself. And it is echoed in the words of Herod who sees Jesus as just John the Baptizer returning. Yet he is anxious to see Jesus.

What if Jesus and his words are life and hope and something new upon the earth? Do we live lives that are a new thing for the world to be amazed at? And do we live resurrection life now surprising people as Jesus did?

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Pimentel laughs off Abcede threat

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE MINORITY Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday laughed off as "a lot of nonsense" the threat by Philippine Commission on Good Government Commissioner Ricardo Abcede to have him cited for contempt for violating a gag order issued by the Supreme Court.

Pimentel dismissed it as an "empty threat" that had no legal basis, asserting that he had never commented on the case now pending before the high tribunal.

"Abcede's threat to cite me for contempt is just a lot of nonsense. It won't prevent me from citing his receipt of a car from a firm to which he was assigned," Pimentel said, referring to earlier reports that Abcede was gifted with a Toyota Camry by Philcomsat Holdings Corp., a sequestered company.

Pimentel clarified that in a statement he issued Sept. 24, he tackled the need to limit the allowances of PCGG nominees to government-sequestered corporations and the need to abolish the commission for having outlived its usefulness.

Gag order

These were not the subject of a gag order by the high court, he stressed.

"I'd like to repeat that it had nothing to do with the gag order relative to the controversy between the Senate and the PCGG over EO No. 1. This is an entirely new matter and I don't think that anyone can prevent us from speaking out on these issues," he said.

EO 1, issued by President Aquino in February 1986, grants PCGG officials immunity from testifying in legislative, judicial and administrative proceedings.

Abcede had said that the PCGG was considering filing a motion to cite in contempt Pimentel and other individuals who "were contemptuously violating" the gag order.

After hearing the oral arguments on the petition for the issuance of a writ of habeas corpus filed by then PCGG chair Camilo Sabio last week, the high tribunal enjoined all parties from discussing the merits of the case. It also ordered Sabio's release from the Senate.

The Senate cited for contempt and issued arrest warrants against Sabio, four PCGG commissioners and five PHC executives after they repeatedly snubbed its inquiry into the alleged losses of government-sequestered corporations. Only Sabio was arrested.

Order recalled

Meanwhile, Senate President Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. said top police officials had given assurance they would recall an earlier order prohibiting policemen from serving Senate-issued arrest warrants during a dialogue last Tuesday.

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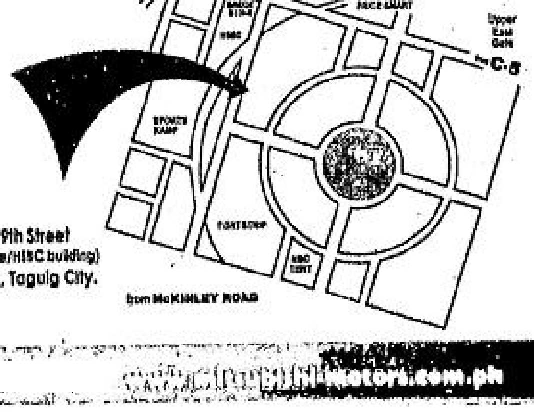

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Palace tells gov't agencies to liquidate all advances

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY INstructed all government agencies to settle unliquidated cash advances of P16.3 billion before the end of the year.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita made clear that the unliquidated advances that Sen. Franklin Drilon has described as "alarming" were incurred not just in the Arroyo administration but in previous administrations as well.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted the advances—which amounted to P16.3 billion, not P17 billion as Drilon said—liquidated by yearend.

He said the amount also covered advances made by officials of jailed President Estrada and President Ramos.

"I will not be surprised if there are unliquidated cash advances of people under Corazon Aquino," he said.

Drilon, the chair of the Senate finance committee, said the unliquidated cash advances of the entire government could translate to 68,000 classrooms and amounted to more than the budgets of many departments.

The opposition in the House of Representatives meanwhile said it would push for the abolition of the intelligence funds of the President and Cabinet officials not engaged in intelligence work.

Minority Leader Francis Escudero said that given the poverty situation in the country and the necessity of spending money for infrastructure and social services, "the President should take the lead in setting the correct example when it comes to frugality and wise spending." *Christine Avendaño and Michael Ubac*

Senate guards: same men, new uniforms

By Alcuin Papa

THEY'RE THE SAME MEN, BUT IN DIFFERent uniforms.

Policemen guarding the House and the Senate will no longer be wearing the uniforms of the PNP's elite Special Action Force, according to Director General Oscar Calderon.

The same men from the SAF will be guarding Congress but they will be transferred to the PNP's Police Security Protection Office (PSPO), Calderon said.

There are around 400 policemen guarding both houses of Congress. Some 130 of the SAF members have opted to remain in their Congress assignments and transfer to the PSPO.

The issue of the "re-deployment" of the SAF from the Senate came up in a meeting between Calderon and Senate President Manuel Villar the other day.

"We were able to explain to Senator Villar that there is no pullout, no relief, no transfer. The uniforms are the only ones that changed actually," he said.

The men will no longer be wearing the camouflage uniforms because they will no longer be with the SAF. They will be wearing the regular PNP uniforms.

"That's what we call downloading. But he is still the same person with the same training," Calderon told reporters.

He said the change came about after Malacañang ordered that the SAF be deployed in counterinsurgency operations. He said the PNP had sent Congress security letters informing it of the SAF pull-out.

He stressed that this move was not precipitated by the Senate's involving the SAF in the serving of its arrest warrant on Presidential Commission on Good Government chair Camilo Sabio.

This reportedly led to a "scolding" of the SAF members by their commanders, which in turn angered the senators.

Calderon earlier clarified that the PNP contingents in Congress were not supposed to be involved in the serving of arrest warrants but only to provide security for the Senate, the House and other vital installations.

He said any movement or activity of these units should be cleared with their commander.

He said that with the transfer to the PSPO of the SAF men assigned to Congress, the PNP has begun replacing them with new recruits.

"Our intention here is to make the SAF 100 percent in operational capability considering that we now have a more active role in internal security operations," Calderon said.

He said the PNP was still in the first phase of its organizational and training process for counter-insurgency.

"We are not at 100 percent yet, not like the AFP which has been been in anti-insurgency operations [longer]. We are focused on strengthening the defense posture of all police stations, strengthening the capability of SAF and training the regional mobile groups. All of these are organizational preps of the PNP," he said.

Calderon said the SAF would be ready to join counterinsurgency operations by the end of the year.

"We hope to have 100 percent capability for all regional mobile groups so that every region has one battalion size unit which can operate in counterinsurgency. The second phase is equipment procurement," he said.

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MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC): (REGION IV) - LUCBAN-SAMPALOC, QUEZON: PADUA, Marienette Devela *(REGION VII) - TALIBON-JETAFE, BOHOL:* DAGALA, Exequil L.; ENRIQUEZ, Kit S. *TRINIDAD-SAN MIGUEL-BIEN UNIDO, BOHOL:* BAUTISTA, Ciriaco Z.; CREDO, Azucena Macalolot; GARCES, Daniel Jose J. *UBAY-PRES. CARLOS P. GARCIA, BOHOL:* BARBARONA, Raul P.; BAUTISTA, Ciriaco Z.; CABALLERO, Calberito M.; ENRIQUEZ, Kit S.; GARCES, Daniel Jose J.; *ALICIA-MABINI, BOHOL:* BARBARONA, Raul P.; GARCES, Daniel Jose J.; MENDE, Olivia Migriño; UBA, Jorge T. *CANDIJAY-ANDA, BOHOL:* BARBARONA, Raul P.; BAUTISTA, Ciriaco Z.; MELENCION, Rey V.; UBA, Jorge T. *GUINDULMAN-DUERO, BOHOL:* BARBARONA, Raul P.; GARCES, Daniel Jose J.; MAGALLANO, Perpetuo Jr. C.; PIOLLO, Aster Apalisok; UBA, Jorge T. *BILAR-SEVILLA, BOHOL:* BARBARONA, Raul P.; BAUTISTA, Ciriaco Z.; GEULEN, Pablito Jr. T.; MENDE, Olivia M.; PIOLLO, Aster Apalisok; UBA, Jorge T.; VARQUEZ, Laebeth Lungay *CARMEN-BATUAN, BOHOL:* BARBARONA, Raul P.; BAUTISTA, Ciriaco Z.; *BILIRAN,* Samuel A.; CREDO, Azucena Macalolot; GEULEN, Pablito Jr. T.; MENDE, Olivia Migriño; UBA, Jorge T. *CATIGBIAN-SAN ISIDRO-SAGBAYAN, BOHOL:* ABAD, Christine Muga.; BARBARONA, Raul P.; CABALIT, Jorge D.; MAGALLANO, Perpetua Jr. C.; MENDE, Olivia Migriño; PIOLLO, Aster Apalisok; VARQUEZ, Laebeth Lungay *(REGION VIII) - SAN POLICARPIO-ARTECHE, SAMAR:* AMOS, Marissa Dadula; BUSTRIA, Nelia Bandilla; CARANZO, Danilo M.; WHITE, Jocelyn Adalim *SAN JULIAN-SULAT, EASTERN SAMAR:* ALCONABA, Reynaldo A.; ECHAGUE, Renato Noel C.; REAGO, Lorenzo A. WHITE, Jocelyn Adalim *SAN JUAN-SAINT BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE:* ALBAO, Fabio Jr. T.; ALCONABA, Reynaldo A.; POSION, Marisa Renomeron *(REGION IX) - NAGA-TITAY, ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY:* DESCALLAR, Romeo T.; OLEGARIO, Rey Andre C.; VERGARA, Vera T. *(REGION X) - CABADBARAN-REMEDIO T. ROMULADEZ, AGUSAN DEL NORTE:* ALONTO, Avecina V.; CAÑETE, Nemesio S.; GONZAGA, Robert B. *MARAMAG-KALILANGAN-PANGANTUCAN, BUKIDNON:* ANDRES, Ray C.; AWITEN, Dominador C., BANAN, Romualdo L.; GAMBOA, Emerita Panganiban; MORDENO, Richard D. DON *CARLOS-DANGCAGAN-KITAOTAO, BUKIDNON:* ANDRES, Ray C.; GAMBOA, Emerita Panganiban; MONEVA, Marlon Jay G.; MORDENO, Richard D. *CALAMBA-BALIANGAO, MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL:* MONEVA, Marlon Jay G.; SALADAGA, Ruelo Aspacio; VILLANUEVA, Isabelo Jr. S. *(REGION XI) - MALALAG-SULOP, DAVAO DEL SUR:* ANDRES, Ray C. *MABINI-PANTUKAN, COMPOSTELA VALLEY:* ENRIQUEZ, R. Alejandro L.; MACASA, Conrado O., MADRAZO, Leo T.; SAMSON, Divina Tabunyag, VEGA, Teodulfo L.; VILLEGAS, Jesse S. *(REGION XII) - LUTAYAN-PRES. QUIRINO-LAMBAYONG, SULTAN KUDARAT:* BALO, Lorenzo F.; FAUSTINO, Herminio B.; HAW, Ma. Fracelyn M.; LEAL, Heathcliff H.; MAMON, Nectar Precious Gumana; RAMOS, Vispocious Jr. I.

12th SHARIA' CIRCUIT COURT(SCC): WAO-BUMBARAN, LANAO DEL SUR - ABANGAD, Ibrahim M.; ABBAS, Ogko D.; ABDUL, Cabib D.; ABDULHAMID, Molok R.; ADIONG, Asima A.; ALAUYA, Aninding M.; ALAWI, Abdulsamad B.; ALI, Anshari P.; ALI, Nasroding A.; AMEROL, Muhammad T., AMPASO, Arab D.; AMPASO, Solaiman L.; BARAPANTAO, Manalang Jr. K., BAYAS, Achmad M.; BENITO, Talib A.; BERUA, Sirikit B.; BOGABONG, Basit A., CALI, Cabili B.; CAMPONG, Ushama T.; DEKIRE, Samrollah M.; DIPATUAN, Khalil B.; GAMOR, Abdulcader A.; GUINAR, Asnawi D.; GURO, Ali P., GURO, Mutalib U.; HADJI SAID, Laut Saddath M.; LAGUINDAB, Khalil S.; LOMONDAYA, Casimra P.; MACALAWI, Amer P.; Manding, Mangandog Sr. T.; MANGOTARIA, Macaundas M.; MINDALANO, Samsodin M., MINDALANO, Sapia U.; PANDAPATAN, Khalil M.; PANGCOGA, Haron A.; ROMOROS, Alberto O.; SABAR, Nadia M.; SANCAAN, Poroa B.; SANSARONA, Susan Ibañez; TAHER, Omar A.; TOMILANG, Basher Sr. M.; UMBARO, Baqueza T.; URSUA, Florante P.; YUSOPH, Oding R.; MIPANGA, Dimapiil T.; MANSUNGAYAN, Zarkhan P. *10th SHARIA' CIRCUIT COURT, LEBAK, SULTAN KUDARAT* - ABDULMAGUID, Abdullah R.; ABDULRACMAN, Noronisah M.; ABDULRAHMAN, Mohammad A.; ALI, Samoan P.; ASIRI, Julamri L.; ATUAN, Esmael S. BAHARAN, Faisal B.; CAMPONG, Ushama T.; DALUMIMBANG, Guiamaludin A.; DARANGINA, Ali P.; GUINOMLA, Sahabudin A.; MAGUINDRA, Buslan A.; MANGOTARA, Macaundas M.; MAULANA, Ahden N.; MUA, Abdullah K.; PADUMAN, Guinald S.; PANGCOGA, Haron A.; RASCAL, Macod D.; RAZED, Kadil S.; SALI, Zumakil M.; TAUG, Almanzor B.; USOP, Husain O.; YUSOPH, Oding B.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than October 06, 2006 to the JBC Secretariat.

All applicants for all judicial positions must submit to the JBC Secretariat ASAP via fax, mail or e-mail their updated JBC Form 1, current cellphone and landline numbers, and current residence and e-mail addresses.

September 26, 2006.

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
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ASIAN FORUM

INQUIRER founding chair and Ramon Magsaysay awardee for journalism Eugenia D. Apostol speaks at the opening ceremonies of the Asian Forum 2006 on Corporate Social Responsibility (AFCSR) of the Asian Institute of Management at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. World Bank Group President Paul Wolfowitz also spoke at Monday's opening. AIM-RVR Center Board of Advisers chair Ramon R. del Rosario Jr. officially opened the Asian Forum 2006. With him in the photo (left to right) are: AIM president Francis G. Estrada, Edgar Chua of Shell Philippines, Oscar M. Lopez of Benpres Holdings Corp., Nileema Noble, UN resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative in the Philippines; JB Baylon of Coca-Cola Export Corp.; Roberto M. Lavina of Phinma; AIM board co-chair Jose L. Cuisia Jr. of Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co.; and AIM-RVR Center executive director Felipe B. Alfonso.

Drilon sees more 'pork'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS ALLIES have a new source of pork barrel in the form of a P400 million scholarship program of the Technical Education Skills Development Authority, Sen. Franklin Drilon said yesterday.

"The 2007 budget of Tesda carries an appropriation of P400 million for scholarships all over the country of about 34,000 scholars," Drilon, chair of the Senate finance committee, said.

Drilon said this is under the Private Education Student Financial Assistance and the PGMA (President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) Training for Work Scholarship Project of Tesda.

The money is part of Tesda's proposed budget of P2.6 billion for 2007, which Drilon noted is more than half of Dole's P5 billion budget.

"From the testimony of (Tesda) Director General Augusto Syjuco Jr., it would appear that these scholarships are allocated per congressional district," Drilon said.

Drilon said the scholarship grants were supposedly based on the economic indicators showing unemployment in a particular region but would be given to nominees of the congressmen.

He said the scholarships would be given without any testing, merely on the basis of slots allocated to the congressional districts.

"There is no rhyme or reason for this system, except that it is part of political patronage. We intend to examine this very closely as apparently it is part of the pork barrel funds inserted in the budget," Drilon said.

Drilon said the Tesda scholarships are similar to the GMA Scholarships given during the 2004 presidential campaign period.

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DOLORES S. ALCANTARA DIED ON Monday at the age of 88. She is survived by husband Pianing; children Fred, Daisy, Sonya and Dan; children-in-law Alice, Rudy, Belen and Yvonne; and grandchildren Leila, Dave, Gino, Katie, Arnold, Ian, Joseph, Evan, Nikki, Charlie and Kris.

Her body lies at the Sta. Maria Dela Strada Parish church on Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be tomorrow at the Heritage Memorial Park in Taguig after the 9 a.m. funeral mass at the Sta. Maria Dela Strada Parish church.

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Labor dep't not keen on having PRC under its wings

By Jerome Aning

SOME OFFICIALS OF THE Department of Labor and Employment are not exactly happy over President Macapagal-Arroyo's executive order attaching the Professional Regulation Commission to the DOLE.

"The professional boards under the PRC are very assertive of their independence. We wonder how much control we would have over them, and whether these boards would even allow us to look into their processes," said a senior labor official who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak with reporters.

"But the transfer is already there, so we cannot do anything about it any more," the source said in the course of expressing his and other officials' doubts on whether Malacañang had thoroughly studied the implications of such a transfer.

The source pointed out that most of the 43 boards under the PRC—such as the Regulatory Board of Nursing—were set up by law and were virtually operating as autonomous bodies to protect their integrity as exam-givers and their independence in deciding administrative cases involving professional malpractice.

The PRC has a bigger bureaucracy compared to other DOLE-attached agencies such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the source said.

(The other agencies attached to the labor department are the Employees Compensation Commission, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Occupational Safety and Health Center and National Wages and Productivity Commission.)

Only a labor undersecretary working full time as PRC supervisor will be needed, the source said in reference to the system in the department whereby undersecretaries and assistant secretaries are assigned as "overseers" of one or more DOLE bureaus and agencies.

The source wondered who had made the decision to transfer the PRC from the Office of the President to the DOLE. He said the PRC would be better off under the Commission on Higher Education because "the practice of a profession is clearly related to education."

According to the source, the issue of the transfer of the PRC should have been separate from the controversy involving the leakage of test questions in the nursing board examination.

GMA orders retake of nursing exams

From page A1

everything or only the test where there was leakage, or whether it will be only for those who may have taken advantage of the review centers where they had registered, all these details will be discussed by Brion and the PRC," Ermita told reporters at his weekly briefing in Malacañang.

According to Ermita, Ms Arroyo decided on a retake of the exam at a meeting with members of her Cabinet on Tuesday.

Investigations

"The President made the decision and agreed with the majority of those who said, 'Yes, let's allow the retake, but leave the details to Secretary Brion,'" he said.

The leakage of test questions for the nursing board exam is now being looked into not only by the National Bureau of Investigation but also by the Senate and the House.

The NBI has recommended the filing of charges against two members of the Board of Nursing whose test manuscripts had been leaked.

PRC Chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero had earlier said there would be no retake despite the leakage.

She subsequently told a recent Senate inquiry into the leakage that the decision not to have a retake and to administer the oath to the exam passers was final.

Sen. Richard Gordon and other senators have been pushing for a retake, saying the leakage had besmirched the reputation of Filipino nurses and the integrity of the nursing licensure exam.

Ms Arroyo had previously aired statements to the effect that she wanted the guilty to be punished and the innocent to be spared, suggesting that a retake was possible.

Yesterday following a Senate budget hearing, Brion told reporters that the PRC decision against a retake of the exam could still change.

He said the matter would be among the talking points at the planned meeting with PRC officials today.

Integrity

"Of course [the decision] can change," Brion said. "It's in the agenda. It's a current problem that we have to look into."

Recalling the discussion at the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, Ermita said his colleagues had argued for the retake in the conviction that "the integrity of the exam and of the nursing profession" was "at stake."

He said members of the Cabinet had also expressed concern that the integrity of other Filipino professionals whose licensure exams were controlled by the PRC could be tainted.

"And therefore, in order to preserve the good reputation of our Filipino professionals, maybe we should get back the respect of employers—both local and [foreign]—for our professionals," he said.

Ermita quoted a Cabinet member who had just arrived from the United States as saying that according to the Philippine Nurses Association in that country, the reputation of nurses there had been somehow affected by the controversy.

"These are the reasons that led to a decision to go ahead and resuscitate the image" of our nurses, Ermita said.

Among those who took part in the discussion were Brion, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, Dante Ang of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

Ermita said the "consensus" of those present was that a retake was "the best thing to do."

Direction, coordination

It was the leakage controversy that prompted the President to issue Executive Order No. 565 "attaching the PRC to the DOLE for general direction and coordination," Ermita said.

He said Ms Arroyo signed the EO on Sept. 11 but it was only released the other day.

He added that Brion's meeting today with PRC officials was also intended to "discuss the parameters of their relationship."

Brion also told the Senate about the executive order placing the PRC under the jurisdiction of the labor department.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, chair of the Senate finance committee, said that it was the first time he and his colleagues had heard of Ms Arroyo's order, and that even labor officials had been caught by surprise.

"They (labor officials) are not so confident that they are equipped to handle such a huge bureaucracy joining the DOLE family," Drilon said. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Cha-cha bid's fate rests on 5 areas

From page A1

Antonino, who wrote one of the opposing parties that the 3 percent was not met in the legislative district of General Santos, three districts in Davao and one in Makati.

But in a press briefing yesterday, Sigaw spokesperson Raul Lambino, said he and his colleagues were "certain" of having met the 3-percent requirement.

"We believe, as our documents would show, that we substantially and adequately complied with the requirement of the Constitution and Republic Act No. 6735. We are certain of that," he said.

Sigaw claimed to have gathered nine million signatures, of which 6.3 million had been verified by the city and municipal registrars of the Comelec.

Lambino said Sigaw had met the minimum 3-percent requirement in the 213 legislative districts nationwide, as provided for in Section 2, Article 17 of the Constitution.

"In the case of General Santos City, former Gov. Hilario de Pedro assured us that they had meticulously followed the process of gathering signatures faithfully," Lambino said, adding that as proof, Sigaw had the "election registrar certification" of the Comelec.

He said, however, that Makati was not among the congressional districts where compliance with the requirement was being questioned.

But Sen. Joker Arroyo, who represented the Senate in the oral arguments, questioned the credibility of the Comelec to certify the signatures.

Arroyo said questions abounded whether the 6.3 million signatures were "genuine and authentic." He also lamented that the authenticity of the signatures "depended on the say-so of the election registrar and no other."

Although faced with the prospect of losing the legal battle in the people's initiative mode to amend the Constitution, Malacañang remains optimistic that it will succeed in putting in place President Macapagal-Arroyo's political reforms during her term.

"It has been the desire of the administration to have Charter change, and if, for whatever reason, one mode cannot pass, there are other modes available, such as the constituent assembly," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters at a briefing.

And if the Supreme Court does thumb down the people's initiative, the President will not see it as a big disappointment because the signature drive has at least raised public awareness on Charter change and focused the political debate on the mode rather than the justification for constitutional amendment, Ermita said.

Michael Defensor, the President's chief of staff, said the people's initiative had educated the public on the pros and cons of Charter change.

"More people are aware of the political essence of Charter change than before, and we think this is good for our overall campaign. Now, the only issue they are considering is how to go about it," Defensor said.

Ermita said that since the people's initiative began this year, more sectors had come out in the open supporting Charter change because they had been "enlightened."

"Some of those who opposed Charter change before are now for [it], and are now only debating the mode to take. Even the Catholic Church agrees there should be Charter change but not now," he said.

After the people's initiative, Ermita said Malacañang would rally behind the constituent assembly as the preferred mode. "The Constitution gave us these modes and we are giving them all a try," he said.

Ermita also said the government was not being pressured to implement Charter change before the May 2007 polls, as widely believed.

He said the government was working toward effecting a parliamentary shift before January, when all candidates are supposed to file their certificates of candidacy.

If that fails, Ermita said, the government had until the end of Ms Arroyo's term to push political reforms.

"It's still a long way to go; many things can still happen," Ermita said.

He conceded that it would be a big failure if the government failed to put in place its desired political reforms by 2010.

Santiago vs Comelec

During the oral arguments on Tuesday, Panganiban maintained his opinion in Santiago vs Comelec that Republic Act No. 6735 (Initiative and Referendum Act) was sufficient to implement constitutional initiatives.

Panganiban and Senior Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno are the only remaining members of the Supreme Court who both voted in favor of amending the Constitution.

"I ordered my staff to conduct a research as to whether there is such a thing as insufficient law, and they came up with nothing," Panganiban said.

He raised the possibility of upholding the Aug. 31 decision of the Comelec junking the petition for initiative filed by Sigaw and Ulap, but at the same time abandoning its decision in Santiago vs Comelec.

"In the future, there may be a real proposal to amend the Constitution. But this cannot push through due to the Santiago ruling, so we may have to allow a reexamination [of the ruling] for the real initiative to push through," Panganiban said.

Meanwhile, former Supreme Court Associate Justice Serafin Cuevas said anti-Charter change groups should not celebrate this early.

"It would be dangerous for [opposition groups to celebrate] because the people in power now have the majority in the [high court]. They are appointees of the President. The administration can count on them," Cuevas said in an interview at the anniversary celebration of the Department of Justice.

Cuevas, who served as justice secretary under the short-lived Estrada administration, rattled off the 10 justices appointed by Arroyo: Chief Justice Panganiban, Cancio Garcia, Dante Tinga, Adolfo Azcuna, Minita Chico-Nazario, Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Antonio Carpio, Renato Corona, Conchita Carpio-Morales and Presbiterio Velasco.

Hard questions

In a press conference, Senator Arroyo said he did not see the Supreme Court reversing its 1997 ruling against the use of a people's initiative to change the Constitution.

He said the present petition could not possibly surmount "three formidable" legal obstacles already highlighted during Tuesday's lengthy arguments in the high court.

"I don't think the Supreme Court will be inclined to reverse itself," said Arroyo.

"It cannot be [reversed] by the way they asked [the proponents]. The hard questions were on the other side," he said.

Arroyo said in a radio interview that a reversal of the 1997 ruling on Santiago vs Comelec would be a "doomsday" scenario.

He said the administration's fallback was the constituent assembly being pushed by the House.

But he said time was not on the side of Charter change proponents because the constituent assembly without the Senate's participation would eventually be brought before the Supreme Court.

He added that there was no more time for Charter change because the mid-term election was just a few months away. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

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Bolante: US using me as pawn …

From page A1

political pawn in exchange for the release of certain American citizens held to account for an alleged rape in the Philippines," Bolante said in a two-page motion dated Sept. 25.

"Bolante seeks to file news articles demonstrating the use of Bolante as a political weapon to further demonstrate that the conflicting reasons provided to Bolante (for the cancellation of his US visa) can only be a pretense and that the visa was improperly revoked," it added.

The news articles referred to the INQUIRER story and another report in the Chinese People's Daily about the rape case.

Bolante was arrested on July 7 on his arrival in Los Angeles. He was told that his B1/B2 visa had been canceled by the US Embassy in Manila due to an arrest warrant issued by the Philippine Senate after he snubbed its hearings on the alleged P728-million fertilizer fund scam.

The money was said to have been used in President Macapagal-Arroyo's election in 2004.

Lawyer H. Harry Roque Jr., who distributed copies of Bolante's motion in a press conference yesterday, said that Bolante's allegation could not be dismissed lightly since it was formally filed with a federal court.

"We cannot simply dismiss what they said (in the motion) because of the dire consequences for Bolante and his lawyers. They could face contempt or disbarment," Roque said.

"It is noteworthy because, for the first time, the allegation that there was a deal between the two governments about this case of Nicole and that Bolante became part of judicial record," he said.

Roque pointed out that the motion came with a "certification from counsel" that their allegations were "true to their belief and knowledge."

"This is a gamble on the part of the lawyers of Joc-joc Bolante. If (US Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice and the other high-ranking American officials get angry and they move that Bolante and his lawyers be cited for contempt, that could possibly happen," Roque said.

Bolante named Rice, US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff as respondents in his habeas corpus petition.

Basis for contempt

"He's saying that they connived to use his case to free the four soldiers. That by itself, if Condoleezza Rice and the others want it, could be a basis for both contempt and disbarment if it were proven that there was no such deal," Roque said.

To dispel all doubts, the US Embassy in Manila should intervene in Bolante's immigration case and have him brought back to the Philippines immediately, he said.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and US Legal Attaché Jeffrey Cole should also "make representations" with the Chicago immigration court hearing Bolante's case to keep its proceedings open to the public, he added.

Roque said that the Chicago court ordered closed-door proceedings after the alleged rape victim's mother revealed the reported offer by the prosecution team leader.

He said he was bothered by the court order. He said he was asking Kenney and Cole "to make representations to open the proceedings anew to the public because of suspicions that there is a deal in this case."

Roque said Bolante should be returned to the country now.

Time to return

"The time for due process is already up. Mr. Bolante has been detained there for quite some time now but up to today he has no valid defense on why he entered the US without a valid visa," Roque said.

He said Bolante could not claim that the cancellation of his visa was illegal since he was given advance notice about the US Embassy's plan to scrap it.

Roque also said he was ready to support Bolante's asylum application if Bolante agreed to tell the truth behind the alleged fertilizer fund scam.

He said he would go to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where Bolante is detained, after Bolante's next immigration hearing to try to get his deposition.

Ground for impeachment

"If he tells the truth, of course that would endanger his life and so we would be ready to support his petition for asylum. If he reveals who ordered him on the fertilizer scam, he would really have (a credible fear of) persecution here in the Philippines," Roque said.

He explained that the fertilizer fund scam was the "only documented case of culpable violation of Constitution, graft and corruption, and betrayal of public trust"—all impeachable offenses that could be brought up against Ms Arroyo next year.

Roque said the Commission on Audit had said that of the P728 million worth of fertilizers, half were ghost deliveries. The remaining 50 percent were overpriced by 1,000 percent, mixed with water, fertilizers for orchids, and delivered during harvest season," Roque said.

Airlines prepare for transfer to Naia 3

By Nikko Dizon

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL FOR THE international airlines operating out of the country's premier international airport.

The airlines have included in their planned budgets for 2007 their possible transfer to the modern but mothballed Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3—as they have been doing for the past four years, INQUIRER sources said yesterday.

"The airlines always hope for the best, that's why we always include Naia 3 in our budget," one airline official said.

There are about 30 airlines operating out of Naia 1, the same clients that the Manila International Airport Authority would most likely have if and when Naia 3 finally opens.

After much legal wrangling, the government last month paid P3.2 billion in initial payment to the Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco), the consortium that built the Naia 3, which paved the way for the issuance of a writ of possession to the government.

With the writ in hand, the government hopes to make the Naia 3 operational soon.

Airline executives have said they wanted to transfer to Naia 3 because the old international terminal has become too congested with the growing number of air travelers.

Every year since 2002, when the Naia 3 was first reported to be ready to open, the airlines had a combined budget of an estimated half a billion pesos for their transfer to the new airport facility, the Airport Operators Council (AOC) said.

Each airline's budget would include provisions for furnishings for the office space at the new terminal, computers, communication facilities, equipment and other items it would need to comply with the minimum operational requirements.

And when the airport terminal's opening was postponed, the budgets reverted back to the airlines' headquarters. But the airlines have since then always included the Naia 3 transfer in their yearly budget proposals, the source said.

"We abide by what's required of us. We make preparations for our possible transfer and the preparations always start with the budget," the source said.

One airline earmarked P50 million for its passenger lounge alone, while another allotted P10 million for its office space in the new terminal.

"It's very strenuous to do the budget. Everything must be itemized to the last detail," the source said.

It is such a tedious process that most airline headquarter offices "would not touch it and deliberate on it until they are sure that the Naia 3 would really open."

"We justify our budget by telling our headquarters that there might be a possibility that it [Naia 3] will open," the source said.

But often their bosses would ask, jokingly: "What year?".

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Fraport case won't affect Naia 3 opening—Palace

THE PLANNED OPENING Of THE NINOY Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 will not be affected by the National Bureau of Investigation's move to file charges against Fraport AG, the German partner of the consortium that built the terminal, for violating the Anti-Dummy law, according to a top Malacañang official.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita also said he did not think there was any loss of goodwill between the government and the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) consortium as a result of the case against Fraport.

"I don't think there could be any loss of goodwill because in the first place the NBI investigation on the violation of the anti dummy law is separate and distinct from the issues in the opening of the international airport," Ermita told reporters.

He said the NBI had been investigating Fraport for the violation.

"So I don't see why it could have any effect in the opening of the airport. These are two separate cases," Ermita said. *Christine O. Avendaño*

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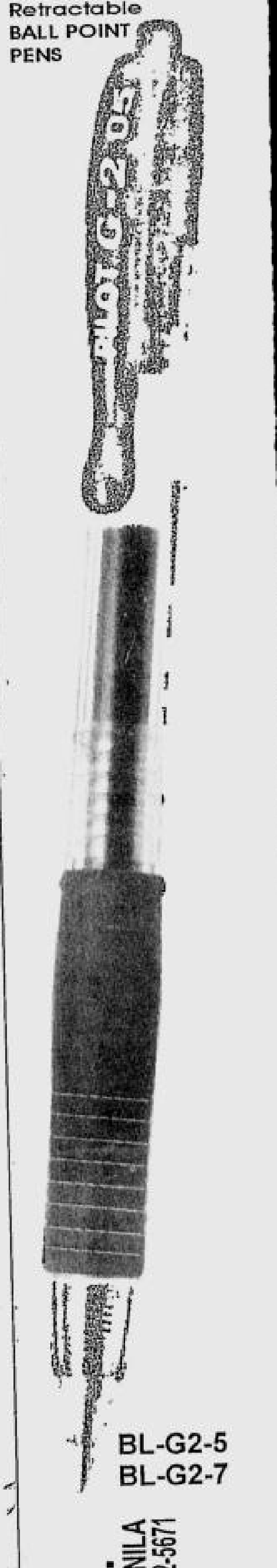

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The Local Government Unit of General Santos City, through the CY 2006 Trust Fund Budget intends to apply the sum of Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,700,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the Purchase of 1 unit Brand New Farm Tractor. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Purchase of 1 unit Brand New Farm Tractor. Delivery of the GOODS is required by 45 calendar days. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsive of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the **Local Government Unit of General Santos City** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of P1,000.00 to the City Treasurer's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested on October 3, 2006, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of October 17, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a half Percent (1 ½%) of ABC or Surety Bond equivalent to Two and a half Percent (2 ½%) of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of October 17, 2006 at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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Website address: www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO
BAC Chairman

(PDI-- Sept 20 & 28, 2006)

Gov't rejects MILF demand for bigger ARMM

MILF rebels raise their guns while in formation at their headquarters in Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat province on Monday. AFP

From page A1

"If the government insists to dillydally and treat the peace talks as a mere counterinsurgency tool, who can blame Muslim Filipinos if they choose other means to continue their legitimate struggle for freedom and self-determination?" Murad said in a statement last week.

"The government must take responsibility for this breakdown of the talks," he added.

'Conditional offer' unacceptable

During talks held Sept. 6-7 in Kuala Lumpur, rebel negotiators rejected a government offer to include some areas in Mindanao on condition that they are subject to constitutional processes.

Murad said the "conditional offer" was something that "no real revolutionary group worthy of its name can accept."

He rejected the government's position that "everything must be tailored fit to the Constitution."

Ermita, however, said adhering to the Constitution was "nonnegotiable."

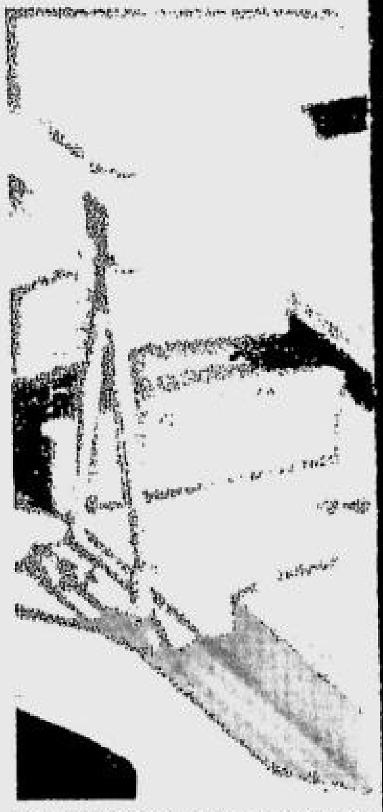
"The bottom line is we cannot do anything unless it's within our Constitution," he said. "We have to find out how the peace process will progress."

'Nobody can scare the gov't'

Asked whether the government is prepared to go back to war if the talks collapse, Ermita said: "Let's put it this way: Nobody can scare the government on anything. We are the government. We have the armed force, we have the armed services, we have the police. But we will do everything to move on with our peace process."

Ermita expressed confidence no hostilities will break a three-year ceasefire, especially with an international monitoring team observing the truce.

"We are confident that the ceasefire will hold. There will be no fighting. The talks will move on," he said. *AP*



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'Milenyo' heads for Me

From page A1

Power interruptions hit Albay and Sorsogon yesterday.

In Northern Samar, Catarman has suffered power outages since Tuesday night because the typhoon toppled several power posts, Gov. Raul Daza told the INQUIRER.

"Other towns in the province are also expected to have some power problems," Daza, reached on his mobile phone, said.

A Pagasa bulletin issued at 5 p.m. yesterday said Signal No. 3 (100 to 185 kph) was in effect over Sorsogon, Catanduanes, Camarines provinces, Southern Quezon, Polillo Island, Marinduque, Masbate, Albay, Burias Island, Ticao Island and Samar provinces.

Signal No. 2 (60 to 100 kph) was hoisted over Romblon, the rest of Quezon, Batangas, Laguna, Rizal, Oriental Mindoro, Leyte and Biliran Island.

Pagasa raised Signal No. 1 (30 to 60 kph) over Metro Manila, Occidental Mindoro, Cavite, Bulacan, Bataan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Aurora yesterday afternoon and warned of flash floods in low-lying areas. Signal No. 1 was also in effect in Southern Leyte, Camotes Island, Northern Cebu, Northern Iloilo, Northern Antique, Aklan and Capiz.

Some low-lying areas in Catarman were flooded due to heavy rains. Pagasa recorded 72 millimeters of rainfall in Catbalogan and 128 mm in Catarman, Samar, much higher than the average rainfall in the province.

Some areas in Ormoc City and Kananga town, both in Leyte, have also experienced flooding, according to Rey Gozon, administrative officer of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Tacloban.

Heavy rains caused the Dalanas River in central Antique to overflow, flooding half of the coastal town of Barbaza.

Stranded passengers

Close to 1,000 passengers bound for Luzon and Mindanao were stranded yesterday at ferry terminals in Eastern Visayas.

Gozon said that as of noon ye
more than 80 vehicles carrying o
passengers were stranded at the f
minals in Barangays Looc and Da
Allen, Northern Samar, and in
town, Southern Leyte.

The Philippine Coast Guard g
61 passenger and cargo vessels
ports of Cebu, Danao, Hagnaya a
daue, leaving hundreds of pas
stranded, Cebu Coast Guard depu
mander Lemuel Alquiza said.

Letecia Corillo, social welfare
for Eastern Visayas, said her of
gether with the local governm
Allen, would provide the strand
sengers with ready-to-eat fo
cooked food starting yesterday.

Corillo said food would also be
ed to those stranded at the Lilo
terminal.

Stranded in Bicol ports

The Office of Civil Defense-Bicol
that nearly 2,500 passengers were s
in the different ports in the region.

Matnog port had the biggest nu
stranded people with 1,742; foll
Pilar port, 320; Tabaco, 245; Bap
bate, 61; Pioduran, 27; Bulan
bang, Camarines Sur, 10, and Vira

The OCD also reported that the
43 buses, 70 trucks, 46 cars, 11 ves
eight motor bancas stranded in the

But based on the report of the P
Coast Guard, 2,016 passengers were
ed in Matnog port, 376 in Pilar and
lan. There were also 40 buses, 61 tr
33 cars stranded in Matnog port.

Coast Guard guidelines

Vessels weighing 2,000 gross t
and below are banned from settin
areas where public storm warnin
No. 2 is in effect.

For areas under Signal No. 1,
weighing 1,000 gross tonnage an

Sun lights up Zambo villa

From page A1

Solar panels have been put up beside the nipa homes lining the dirt roads of the barangay, providing 18 hours of electricity that has literally lit up the lives of farmers.

Barangay Marcelo, home to over 300 rubber and coconut farmers, is one of six towns in the province that have benefited from the Solar Power Technology Support Project (SPOTs) for agrarian reform communities (ARCs).

The P1.7-billion SPOTs funded by the Spanish government seeks to reduce rural poverty in the nonenergized and off-grid ARCs through solar electrification, rural enterprise development and institutional strengthening.

The SPOTs is implemented jointly by the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Energy in five regions covering 40,000 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

"Now, people don't have to travel 9 km to the *poblacion* just to buy candles and kerosene for their lamps," Raul Sy, chief agrarian reform program officer, said at a media briefing by the ARBs of Marcelo Multi-Purpose Cooperative center, which now boasts of its own computers, karaoke, water dispenser and other electrical appliances.

Sy said classes, which used to be suspended on rainy days because of the insufficient natural light in classrooms, could now proceed past 3:30 p.m. and students could do their homework at home even at night.

Improved teaching methods

The solar electrification of Barangay Marcelo and other ARCs have led to increased survival rate in schools and improved teaching methods through the use of television and DVD players, he said.

It has also reduced the prevalence of early vision problems among the children because they no longer have to endure reading with minimum lighting. Their parents, meanwhile, are able to devote what used to be travel time for
kerosene to livelihood.

The project has paved the way
nomic activities in public halls i
which are also engaged in mat w
making of barbecue sticks, sto
palay (unhusked rice) and raising
as additional livelihood. It has also
non-economic activities like m
training and socialization for reside

The SPOTs has provided light
homes, 16 schools, 14 barangay h
11 barangay health centers in the
tain communities of Zamboan
Norte.

Biggest NPA front

The province used to be a fe
cruitment ground for the commun
People's Army, which easily convi
gruntled landless farmers to
ranks. Mindanao hosted the bigg
front in the 1980s to the 1990s.

About 30 percent of the farme
have been awarded lands under th
prehensive Agrarian Reform P
(CARP) in the province are form
members, according to provincia
an reform officer Rogelio Balladar

Many of them, like the farmer
municipality of Jose Dalman 76 k
Dipolog, the provincial capital, ha
on to develop their lands and
their produce to companies li
Miguel Corp.

Rebel returnees

The Sigilo ARC in Jose Dalman
whose members are rebel returne
started supplying cassava to San
Corp. through a memorandum o
ment inked in April last year.

The farmers have sold 60,000 k
sava in April and are expecting to
195,000 kg next year. The contra
the farmers' cooperative at least P
kilo of cassava, and has encourage
NPA rebels to stay and develop the

"I like living here; it's hassle

"BEST COPY AVAILABLE"

es a Wednesday visit to the Hanjin Shipyard at the Subic
n artist's rendition of the shipyard project. LYN RILLON

Menthol cigarettes give stronger hit but deadlier

From page A1

blacks in the United States suffer disproportionately from smoking-related ailments.

For a variety of historical and cultural reasons, including targeted advertising, about 70 percent of black smokers smoke menthol cigarettes such as Kool or Newport compared to about 30 percent of white smokers, according to the study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

This, combined with the difficulty in kicking the menthol cigarette habit, could help researchers figure out why blacks in the United States have higher rates of cancer, heart disease and other smoking-related illnesses even though they generally smoke less, the study said.

The study, which looked at the smoking habits of 1,535 people over 15 years, did not determine why menthol cigarettes were harder to kick than regular tobacco cigarettes, said Dr. Mark Pletcher of the University of California, San Francisco, the lead author of the study.

"Beyond the obvious, that they're sort of more pleasant to smoke, there is some evidence that it (menthol) inhibits the metabolization of nicotine, the addictive component," he said in an interview.

"So it (nicotine) will last longer. You may get a bigger hit or a longer-lasting hit when you have menthol, though that is still speculation."

Menthol "was associated with a lower likelihood of trying to quit in the first place," the study said.

It added that menthol smokers, if they did quit, were almost twice as likely to relapse after trying to stop and also less likely to stop for a sustained period of time.

Pletcher's study of 808 women and 727 men found that 69 percent of those who smoked menthol cigarettes in 1985 were still smoking at follow-up examinations in 2000 compared to 54 percent of smokers who bought regular cigarettes.

The study said it found no evidence that peppermint oil-based menthol itself made such cigarettes more dangerous.

"Menthol and nonmenthol cigarettes seem to be equally harmful per cigarette smoked" in terms of heart disease and declines in lung function, the study concluded. *Reuters*

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are not allowed to leave the port.

The travel ban on vessels of certain weight is being implemented in accordance with a Philippine Coast Guard memorandum known as the Guidelines on Movement of Vessels During Heavy Weather.

Milenyo is the first tropical storm to enter the Philippines since the weather bureau announced last week the development of El Niño, a phenomenon marking anomalies in sea surface temperature of the equatorial Pacific region affecting the Philippines.

Mayon Volcano

Volcanologists said the threat of lahar from Mayon Volcano due to continuous rains brought about by Milenyo was remote.

Alex Baloloy, senior science research specialist at the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), said there was no lahar or mudflow threat due to the absence of pyroclastic flow in the recent eruptions.

In its bulletin yesterday, the Phivolcs recorded seven volcanic earthquakes, indicating continuous ascent of magma to the crater, and 18 tremor episodes, caused by lava extrusion and rock fall activity on the slopes of the volcano.

Phivolcs said Mayon remained at a high level of unrest with fair probability for explosive eruptions.

The extended danger zone in the southeast sector, 7 km from the crater, and the 6-km radius permanent danger zone remained off-limits to people.

Mayon, a popular tourist destination, has been spewing lava, mud, huge rocks and noxious gas since July. *Reports from Leila B. Salaverria in Manila; Joanna Los Baños, with report from Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Vicente S. Labro, Joey A. Gabieta and Jhunnex Napallacan, and Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas; and Reuters*

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free. I

have the freedom to move around," Norie Dingal said in the Subanen dialect during an interview with the INQUIRER in Jose Dalman, another SPOTs site.

Dingal was a finance officer of the NPA's Big Beautiful Country (BBC) Command operating in Zamboanga del Norte. She was with the NPA from 1984 until the military raided its camp and arrested her and other rebels in 2001.

After being detained for three months in Piñan, she returned to her family in Roxas, thanks to some police intervention. Her work for the nongovernment organization Convergence for Peace and Development led her to Jose Dalman, where she is now finance officer of the Sigamok Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

"I believed the (communist) propaganda that there will be agrarian reform and we would have our lands," Dingal recalled. She and her husband Jimmy, also a former NPA rebel, now own a 1.33-hectare land in Jose Dalman planted to coconut, corn and soon, cassava.

Land redistribution

The Dingals have found other ex-NPA rebels like Judy Catubig in the municipality. After being an organizer for the NPA BBC Command for seven years, Catubig has returned to his town, peacefully managing the 17-hectare farm owned by his (Judy is male) family.

"Luckily for us, there is not much resistance to land distribution from landowners except in terms of land valuation. We have distributed 55,000 hectares of land, over the target 51,000 hectares," Baladares said.

The DAR in Zamboanga has found an additional 124,000 ha of agricultural land that can be covered by CARP, but this has yet to be validated, according to Baladares.

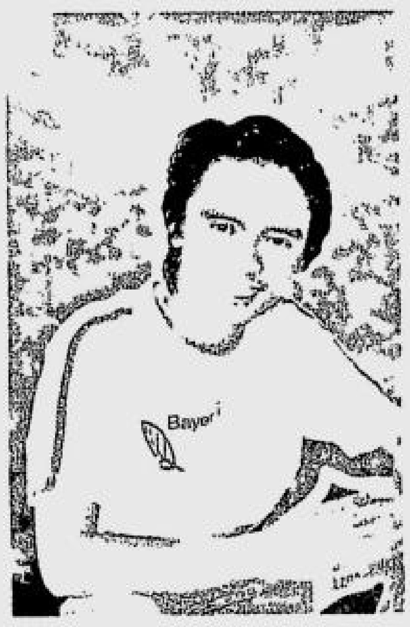
The SPOTs is now on its second phase, which will benefit an estimated 55,000 households in 15 provinces in Mindanao.

Bayer Marks 5 Years of BYEE

Five years since the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy (BYEE) Program was launched in the Philippines, the 87-strong network of youth environmental leaders is making its presence increasingly felt. Its alumni club has been selected as the national focal point of the UNEP Southeast Asia Youth Environment Network.

Distinguished Alumni

At the recent Tunza World Youth Conference held by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Bangalore, India, Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Reinier Tinapay had the distinct honor of being elected to the highest position in the UNEP Tunza Youth Advisory Council for Asia and the Pacific. In his position, Reinier maintains close ties with youth groups all over Asia and the Pacific, and represents the consensus of his youth constituents in all UNEP forums. He was part of a 7-youth delegation sent to the 7th Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) and the 9th Global Ministerial Assembly held in Dubai.



An officer of the Watershed Management Youth Council of Davao, he and his organization once exposed an illegal plantation inside a Mindanao nature reserve, which eventually led to the closure of the plantation following legal proceedings. His story landed in over five German papers, including the important regional newspaper Mannheimer Morgen. "All these achievements would not have been possible if not for the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy program and through God's grace," Reinier said gratefully.

Within the BYEE ranks is a young inventor, Bonar Laureto, who co-invented a unique technology that converts the industrial solid wastes of sugar mills and refinery plants into cement. Following seven years of research, Laureto succeeded to file his patent application and is close to bringing his invention to a commercial level. "The BYEE has connected me to people who have the capacity to help me implement my invention and put the technology to good use," Laureto said. He continues to demonstrate his passion for the environment in his current work as Executive Assistant to Atty. Antonio Oposa, a leading environmental lawyer.

Janice Lao recently completed her MsC in Environmental Change and Management under a full scholarship at the University of Oxford. "Many opportunities opened up to me since I became a Bayer Young Environmental Envoy. I was exposed to the best environmental practices of Bayer in Germany during the study tour and saw firsthand the steps that a specific industry took on addressing their environmental impacts and concerns." Today she works for Environmental Resources Management in Hong Kong, advising clients on the environmental and social risks of their investments and assisting private corporations to be sustainable enterprises.

Bayer-UNEP Partnership

As part of its corporate social responsibility, Bayer is a proud partner of UNEP in its global youth activities. In 2004, an agreement was signed by the heads of UNEP and Bayer, Professor Klaus Toepfer and Mr. Werner Wenning, making Bayer the first private sector partner of UNEP in the area of youth and the environment.

It was back in the mid-1990s when UNEP and Bayer began working together on projects involving youth and the environment, primarily in the Asia-Pacific region. "The partnership's focus on young people is borne out of a conscious decision. We are convinced that we have to involve committed young people in environmental issues because they will be the ones to make the important decisions of tomorrow regarding the development of our planet," said Jean Broué, Managing Director of Bayer Philippines. "Together we want to help raise the environmental awareness of young people all over the world and support them in their commitment to sustainable development."

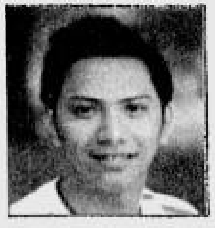
Bayer supports UNEP with a funding of EUR 1 Million per year for about a dozen environmental projects for young people around the globe. The company has integrated its own projects and activities into the joint program. At the heart of the partnership is the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Program, where outstanding youth from 16 countries around the world get to visit Germany for a weeklong environmental study tour. •

2006 Bayer Young Environmental Envoys honored tonight

Tonight, 13 young men and women will be recognized for their projects and work in sustainable development and environmental protection. Selected in a nationwide search, these young envoys, coming from various fields-- engineering, law, communications, management, forestry-- share a love and passion for the environment.

Four of these 13 young people will be selected to go on an environmental study tour of Germany.

Narsheen Artiaga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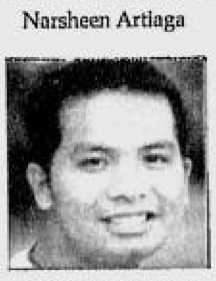
Francis Ron De Guzman

Janus Le-an Dellava

Edgar Geguiento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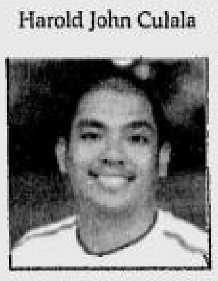
Benito Grefalda, Jr

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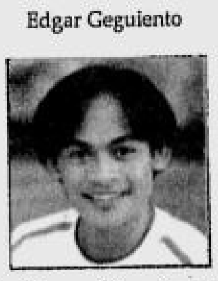
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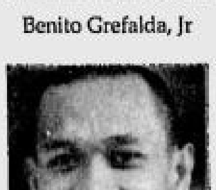
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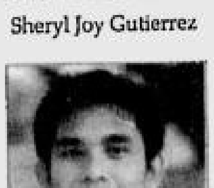
Leonardo Udasco, Jr.

Bayer Young Environmental Envoy
In Partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme

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SQUASHING A MOSQUITO CAN BE AN ACT OF self-defense, especially in these times when a dengue epidemic threatens. So is swatting down a fly which can carry so many diseases. But doesn't one need at least a similar justification for taking the life of another human being? To some people, like Francisco Gerona, the answer apparently is "no."

EDITORIAL

Patrick Vincent Banda was only 5 years old when he first climbed the National Power Corp. transmission tower near their home in Barangay Gayagaya, San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan, according to their neighbors. Performing this dangerous balancing act was just one manifestation of his unbalanced mind, his mother said. He did it a few more times over the years, but always managing somehow to come down safely every time. Until last Saturday, when he did it one more time and landed dead on the ground.

Banda, who was 12, climbed the tower at around 11 that morning and neighbors quickly rushed to witness his high-wire act. At times, he would just sit on a steel beam, but sometimes he would walk, prance or dance, to the amusement and anxiety of the crowd below. His mother and others pleaded with him to come down. He ignored them.

Around 2 p.m., Gerona, a barangay council member, thought he had seen enough. He went behind a van, took out a gun and fired three times at the boy. Like a wounded bird, Banda hung on to a beam, but ever so slowly as in a suspense movie, he lost his grip and fell from the tower—all in full view of the crowd and a television crew.

Citizens may kill in self-defense under our laws. But surely, the boy, who was evidently not of sound mind if of sound body, posed no immediate danger to the 62-year-old barangay official. At least not where he was, perched 150 feet above the ground. So why did Gerona use him for target practice?

"He had a one-word explanation for his action: "*Pasaway.*" The boy was a pest, and to the village official, that made him less than a mosquito or a fly.

But much as the young boy's cold-blooded murder shocks and revolts, it hardly surprises anymore. It's just another example of how cheap human life has become in these parts. Sometimes, it takes only the slightest provocation—like singing somebody else's favorite song—for murder and mayhem to happen. Sometimes, it is fatal to be merely a member of an organization that may be legal but deemed dangerous nonetheless by government officials and their agents, like so many leftist organizations. And sometimes, murder requires no reason at all, like the public execution carried out by Gerona last Saturday.

What could Gerona have been thinking when he pulled the trigger? He must be a great fan of newly retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who left a trail of death among leftist activists wherever he was assigned, from Mindoro to Eastern Visayas and finally Central Luzon. For what's the difference between killing one innocent child and dozens of innocent civilians who just happen not to share one's political views? Palparan's grim record earned for him high praise from President Macapagal-Arroyo as well as a promise of appointment to a senior government position in appreciation.

If Palparan gets his reward, Gerona ought to be considered for a higher position, too. He would be perfect as chief of security of the University of the Philippines, where there are plenty of *pasaway*. Like students who lead marches against the Arroyo administration. Or activists who pelt top military officials with raw eggs. Or fraternity members who run naked around campus. Gerona might even get Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to write him a letter of recommendation.

Sanctions vs Nokor

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAS IMPOSED FINANCIAL sanctions against North Korea. The sanctions effectively ban 15 North Korean-related organizations and trading firms as well as one individual from remitting funds overseas.

The measure was decided in line with a UN Security Council resolution unanimously adopted on July 15, condemning North Korea's test-firing of missiles on July 5. Although more than two months have passed since the adoption of the resolution, North Korea has been ignoring it. Imposing sanctions was the right course of action for the government to take.

FOREIGN COMMENT

International cooperation is necessary to maximize the effects of the sanctions.

China and South Korea, which have far greater trade with North Korea than Japan or Australia, should impose similar sanctions to see the largest possible effect of the measures. *Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)*

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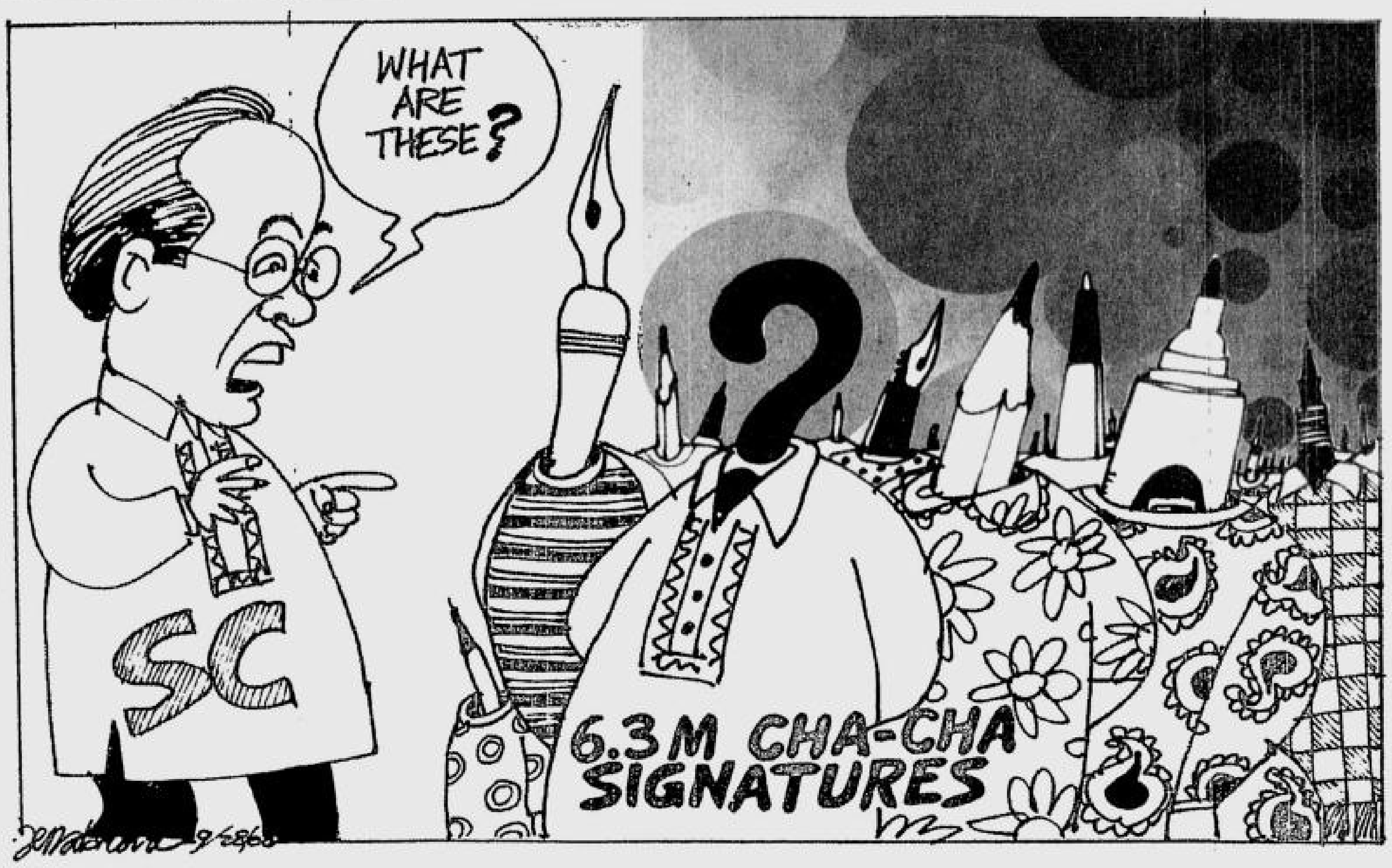


Feel those wallets?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DAVAO CITY—"A FULL POCKETBOOK GROANS more loudly than an empty stomach," Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said. And FDR's counsel resounds in what the "Population-Growth-Poverty Nexus: Evidence from the Philippines" study asks: How does this affect the wallets of local governments?

This just-published Asia Pacific Policy Center (APPC) analysis devotes its second section to the issue: "Population Growth And Incomes—Implications on Revenues and Expenditures of Local Government Units."

LGUs fill the "driver's seat" under the Local Government Code, note APPC's Rosemarie Edillon and Carlos Abad Santos. Pocketbook decisions in the 80 provinces, 117 cities and 41,984 barangays, increasingly depend on local officials.

If this country started its "demographic transition," how would the reduced populations rewrite those LGU balance sheets?

Modern medicine and education triggered a drop in both birth and death rates. They strike a new balance in slower population growth. Scientists dub this as the "demographic transition."

Japan has completed this route. It is ongoing in Indonesia and Vietnam. But, so far, it has not started in a single Philippine province. Computer simulations by Edillon and Abad Santos focus on how population affects politically volatile taxes which LGUs are allergic to jacking up. They examine Internal Revenue Allotments which LGUs overuse as financial crutch. The study also gauges the effects of pruned-down social services and whittled-down government overhead.

The study built on two previous analyses: (a) a 2004 comparison of Philippine and Thailand performance, given their different population paths; and (b) the 2006 analysis of how large proportions of youngsters affect income in 74 provinces.

Between 1975 and 2000, Thailand's transition held down the population increase to 63.1 million, from 41 million. Without a transition, the Philippines' population doubled: from 43 million to 81.6 million. Today, it exceeds 86.3 million—and is still growing.

Saddled with a large "bulge" of dependents, Filipino incomes grew only by 2.6 times—"cadaverous when compared to Thailand's eight times," noted University of the Philippines' Dennis Mapa.

What if the Philippines had followed Thailand's population growth path? Then, 4.03 million Filipinos would have broken free of the poverty treadmill and whittled the poverty head count down to 17.6 million. And 2.82 million individuals would have been better off by now.

"Young population matters," the study asserts. "And contrary to the cliché, more is not necessarily merrier." In fact, slicing a percentage point from the number of dependents jacks up *provinciano* incomes from P27,443 to P29,063. "This would mean an increase of 6 percent in national average per capita income."

Mindsets remain formidable hurdles, Edillon and Abad Santos admit. An IRA check makes for a full pocketbook, in FDR's lament. But benefits from smaller populations—say, in terms of quality of life improvement—are not quickly felt. "There seems to be little incentive for LGUs to prioritize resources for population management."

The study's detailed computations and conclusions will be presented to LGU executives in Naga, Iloilo and Zamboanga seminars, organized by the Philippine Center for Development and Population. Sparks will fly as they feel their wallets. Some of the findings:

- "All provinces will register positive net gains from lower population and per capita incomes. Metro Manila cash registers, for example, could ring in P4.23 billion more and Negros Occidental P1.09 billion.

Other top gainers would be Laguna, Cebu, Pangasinan, Batangas, Palawan, Isabela, Misamis Oriental and Negros Oriental.

- Changes from a demographic transition would see winners and losers in IRA allotments. Ten provinces that had fewer dependents would reap a windfall. Those with the heaviest dependency burdens stand to lose anywhere from nil to 8.2 percent.
- But savings in LGU expenses could turn around 22 provinces that would lose in IRAs as population declines. "Excluding Tawi-Tawi, the provinces would be able to generate an average net monetary benefit of P331 million."
- Higher per capita incomes, stemming from a slowdown in population increases, would result in higher LGU incomes. This would enhance badly needed delivery of social services…

There are two channels through which population management can make an impact on the lives of people: increase per capita income ("bake a bigger pie") and increase government revenues for redistribution ("make the pie slices fairer").

By themselves, LGUs can independently manage their own population programs and still be assured of net benefits. "There's no need for individual provinces to adopt a wait-and-see-attitude …. Early managers can emerge as winners."

The "demographic transition" does not happen as a matter of course," the study says. It must be started. "And the experience of other countries shows that once the second phase of a demographic transition begins, its benefits can last, at least, a century … But we have to begin."

Means can be debated, the study says. But all can agree that we need to exert that first big push to get out of the vicious nexus. And this is: unchecked population choking development and crimping poverty reduction.

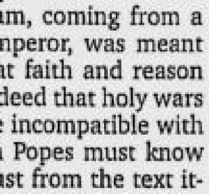
* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Footnote to regression

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



SOME FRIENDS HAVE ASKED ME WHAT I think of the furor involving the Pope. There seems no escaping the subject after all.

Mona Siddiqui, the director of the Centre for the Study of Islam in Glasgow University offers some very good insights about it, which I share fully. He is not sparing in his criticism of fellow Muslims. "As a Muslim I remain perplexed. Why are Muslims magnifying every incident to the level of a global conflict? Adulation and veneration of the Prophet may be laudable qualities but … the ease with which marches are mobilized and threats directed are symptoms of a community not only feeling under siege but slightly reveling in their victim status."

But he is unsparing in his criticism of the Pope as well: "I'm sure that Pope Benedict did not deliberately intend to offend the Prophet in particular. But as someone who was previously the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, he is not naive and must have known that his speech could be contentious and open to all sorts of interpretations …. This incident is not about defending freedom of speech … it is about recognizing that pitting one faith against another to show the superiority of one and the deficiencies of the other is a dangerous and arrogant exercise… Both Christianity and Islam have blood on their hands."

He has very sage advice for people of his faith: "Muslims must learn that differing viewpoints and multiple voices are the very essence of civil society. Even when the viewpoint touches on something as sacred as the Prophet and his legacy, responses must be dignified and respectful. This would reflect the true essence of Islam; calling for revenge and retribution is doing little more than proving all the critics right."

I agree with the sentiment. I respect religion, but I am not a great fan of religions that cannot separate Church and State. That is an open invitation to intolerance. That was the case with Christianity not too long ago, which kept the sun revolving around the earth. Indeed, I am not a great fan of religions that construe difference as heresy and punish it harshly. Lest we forget, Salman Rushdie still has a *fatwa*, or death sentence, hanging on his head for writing "The Satanic Verses," courtesy of that modern-day caricature of a religious fanatic, the Ayatollah Khomeini. Of course, Christians too have their share of fanatics—none better than Pat Robertson, the preacher who wants duly elected Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez murdered. But it's quite another thing when the death sentence carries with it the backing of the State—as it does with Iran, its government lifting the *fatwa* against Rushdie in compliance with Britain's precondition for restoring normal relations but reimposing it soon afterward. That deserves the condemnation of the world. Intolerance may not invoke religious tolerance.

That said, nothing may justify either the uncalled-for remarks of the Pope about Islam. I am not a great fan of Benedict either, and find comparing him to his predecessor, John Paul II, not unlike comparing Martin Luther King to George W. Bush. Pope Benedict and his supporters have repeatedly explained that the offending passage about Islam, coming from a 14th-century Byzantine emperor, was meant to highlight the theme that faith and reason are not incompatible, or indeed that holy wars are not holy at all, they are incompatible with true faith. But surely even Popes must know that meaning comes not just from the text itself, or from what is explicitly said, but from the context in which something is said. If you are an imam, and you quoted a Roman emperor saying the Jews were a people who thought nothing of butchering others, including their own, while Israel was busy invading Lebanon, you won't be able to explain that away as a historical footnote.

The Pope's supporters have said that, unfortunately, the Pope is not a PR dream, he is a PR nightmare. But this is more than a PR problem. Benedict isn't just the Pope, he is a Pope who has been at pains to reconvert Europe—and not quite incidentally halt the advance of Islam—by demonstrating the superiority of Christianity. He is a Pope who, as Siddiqui points out, headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, which not quite incidentally, too, traces its roots to the Inquisition. It was in that capacity that Benedict, then aka Joseph Ratzinger, sought to stamp out religious or ideological impurities within the Catholic Church itself, notably in the form of the Theology of Liberation which the Latin American bishops in particular were ardently espousing.

And if all that wasn't enough, Benedict's quote of a medieval emperor, which comes very early on his speech—I have this image of his audience's jaw dropping in disbelief—strikes a monumental contrast with one of his predecessor's brightest moments, when Pope John Paul II apologized to the world for the atrocities Christianity wreaked during the last two millennia. Islam and Christianity do have blood on their hands. The thrust of John Paul II's papacy was ecumenism, or trying to bring out what was best in all religions. The thrust of Benedict's papacy, at least so far, seems the opposite, which is pointing to the worst in other religions, and which is the worst aspect of Christianity itself, the mountain of bones of presumed heretics being fierce proof of it.

Completely ironically, the one who seems to inherit in part John Paul II's frame of mind is Bill Clinton who, after lambasting Fox in an interview by Fox itself last week, later told NBC's "Meet the Press" that the biggest problem in the world today is "the illusion that our differences matter more than our common humanity."

What can one say? Sometimes asceticism sucks and BJs improve the mind.

Enlightening exchange

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE HEARING OF ORAL ARGUMENTS FOR AND against people's initiative in the Supreme Court lasted a good 10 hours, from 1 p.m. up to 11 p.m. last Tuesday, Sept. 26. Both sides claimed some victory, but it was the exchanges between counsels and justices in those 10 hours that were most enlightening and revealing. I confess to having been dumbfounded by many questions Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, whom former President Joseph Estrada appointed to the Supreme Court in 2000, threw at Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura. It makes me wonder how well disciplined and prepared some of our high magistrates are to tackle tough issues.

* * *

The INQUIRER reported Gutierrez's query to Nachura, "Will you entrust the fate of our country, the Filipino people, in the hands of 6.3 million voters whom you and I do not know?" The justice fired the question "after Nachura admitted to not having examined the names of the millions of signatories who Sigaw claimed supported the initiative."

But surely Gutierrez is aware that examining those signatures was not the job of Nachura but of the local election registrars across the country, as per RA 3765, the law on people's initiative. If the local registrars certified the signatories as bonafide voters and their total number met the required 3 percent of the total registered voters in each district, then their signatures should be deemed valid.

* * *

Gutierrez obviously did not believe that the broad masses of the Filipino people were capable of sound judgment, for she also questioned "whether the signatories understood what they were signing." Hers was a sad commentary, for it mocks the very foundation of people's sovereignty, which is the basis of people's initiative. One thing is sure: the masses had a better appreciation of the issue they signed for than the jurist had of the Court's task last Tuesday.

Sigaw advocates assert that the constitutional requirement for initiative of 12 percent of the total number of registered voters corresponds only to about 5 million signatures. Thus, even granting that some of the 6.3 million signatures may be questioned, there will still be enough to meet the requirement.

* * *

Gutierrez apparently forgot that Nachura was there not as counsel of the local government authorities but in compliance with the Court's order for him to file a comment on the Sigaw petition. Seeking the sol-gen's comments is a practice regularly adopted by the Court when faced with constitutional issues and those of "transcendental importance" to the nation. It just happens that this time the sol-gen agrees with Sigaw's position that the legal and constitutional requirements of the initiative were satisfied. But that was not good enough for the lady jurist who was the most vocal among the justices in airing anti-initiative sentiments. She also noted the alleged lack of merit of the parliamentary system, citing the recent military coup in Thailand, and expressed doubts about its ability to deliver economic recovery. This was something clearly out of sync, since the hearing was meant to determine whether the people's initiative satisfied legal and constitutional requirements.

* * *

If the senators have their own nightmares about their future under a new Constitution, some magistrates were also understandably worried about prospects of their powers being clipped. The worry is premature, since there is still the plebiscite where the Filipino people will make their final judgment.

Two justices expressed concern over the proposal of Rep. Constantino Jaraula, the main Charter change proponent in the House, that the new parliament be allowed to amend charter provisions by a two-thirds vote instead of the present three-fourths. One justice felt that such a change in the voting requirement would make amendments so facile and far-reaching and could even target the Court's jurisdiction, say, on economic issues, its rules, its budget and its authority to whip institutions into line under the "grave abuse of discretion" principle. For instance, the Comelec threw out the 6.3 million signatures on the ground that a 1997 Court ruling in Santiago vs. Comelec held that there was no enabling law to govern people's initiative. One justice argued that the Court would be hard put to accuse the Comelec of grave abuse of discretion as it claimed to be merely upholding the ruling. Sigaw's counsel Raul Lambino assured the magistrates that the initiative's draft charter does not carry those proposed moves against the Court.

* * *

There were funny moments, such as when various counsels for the anti-Cha-cha bloc argued about how many sections of the 1987 Constitution were to be amended. Some said they counted over 100 sections to be changed, another said 127 and yet another said 139 amendments. It became a battle of statistics and facts. Finally an amused Justice Romeo Callejo Sr. cracked, "Ah, lawyers have never been good at counting anyway!"

* * *

One lawyer who clearly emerged a winner was Sigaw ng Bayan's chief advocate, Raul Lambino. Until yesterday, he was largely an unknown factor to members of the Court, and they had never heard him personally. But after his appearance, a number of justices were impressed by the way he remained calm, cool and collected under fire, especially when tough issues were being discussed such as when change may be considered an amendment or a revision. "He just couldn't be shaken," one justice was overheard saying. They were also impressed with Lambino's grasp of issues pertaining to initiative, but this is not surprising, as he and his band of advocates had been chewing on nothing but this issue during the past year. The joke is that Lambino's plan all along was really to gain national prominence via Sigaw, so he could run for the Senate in May 2007 and rally it for Charter change.

Where to take your electronic junk

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE (FROM METRO Manila and other major cities) no longer have to search far for an "electronic junkyard" where our unwanted stuff could be consigned to, sorted properly for reuse or recycled. There is a way to prevent the rise of Payatas-like wastelands made up of toxic and harmful non-biodegradables, such as, computers, cell phones, microwave ovens, electronic toys and gadgets, batteries and the like. Wall-size TVs, and tiny MP3 players and digital cameras will soon join the march to these junkyards.

Walk through the Jurassic Park that is your house or office and identify the electronic dinosaurs that have been sitting in dusty corners for years. At some point, they reached obsolescence or were beyond repair. Where do you take them if there are no takers? They shouldn't be consigned to the garbage dumps or coral reefs. They could be toxic and hazardous to living things. So where do these hardware go and wait to be reincarnated or recycled?

Some years ago, I brought a "car-trunk-ful" of these stuff to a vocational school of electronics that had use for them. I was so thankful they took them all—from cordless phone to dot matrix printer to radio/tape recorder that had been silent for 20 years plus so many more. But I forgot to bring the 1993 laptop whose manufacturer is now extinct. It's still waiting to be properly laid to rest.

The greenies have answers to questions pertaining to wet garbage and other biodegradable matter. But when it comes to the electronic gadgets, few can come up with concrete solutions as simple as where, what, how, when. Like, where should deadly dead batteries go besides the garbage dump?

This column piece is a recycled one, by the way, a chip off a long one, happily rewritten to announce a piece of good news: The Waste Trading Market or Recyclables Collection Event (RCE).

For several years now the Philippine Business for the Environment (PBE) has been running a yearly RCE that encourages groups, communities, institutions and individuals to bring their recyclables to buying stations (usually big, open spaces). Junk (bottles, cans, ink cartridges, paper, etc.) could be exchanged for cash or new ones. This activity helps divert still useful materials from the landfills to the recycling industry. Donate your old, broken down computers, TV, aircon, cell phones, fax machines, laptop, adaptors, batteries, etc., but if there are buyers, that would be great. The goal is to not let these things end up in dumps.

Starting Oct. 6 and every first Friday of the month thereafter, the "Waste Market" will be at Goldcrest parking lot, Arnaiz Ave., Makati. Starting Oct. 20 and every third Friday of the month thereafter, it will be at the Ayala Alabang Town Center (in front of St. Jerome Parish, parking lot 4), Muntinlupa. This is a pilot project that will run till December.

And where do all the electronic junk (or the so-called non-traditional waste) go? PBE has a tie-up with HMR Enviro-cycle Philippines that has a plant in Sta. Rosa. Participating recyclers have complied with the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) requirements. They are supposed to recycle, not discard, stuff in the landfill.

Over the past years, RCEs have collected some 91 10-ton dump trucks of waste and diverted these from landfills. The estimated economic value of the waste may not be huge, but the good done for the environment by the recycling cannot be quantified.

The PBE office is on the 2nd floor of DAP Building, San Miguel Ave., Pasig City. Tel 6353670, 6352650 to 51. The RCE coordinator is Nancy Pilien. The executive director is Lisa Antonio. The chair is Edgar Chua, CEO of Shell.

Computer recycling is not new. One US group that I discovered on the Internet some years ago has this come-on: "We recycle surplus micro computer equipment to maximize its economic value and minimize its environmental impact." Back Thru the Future Micro Computers Inc. had some terrifying data at that time.

"Did you know? Of 350 million desktop computers sold since 1982, 50 percent (175,000) of these machines are in storage today. According to the National Safety Council only 6 percent of all PCs manufactured are recycled, while 70 percent of all major appliances are."

The company has several strategically located warehouses in the United States. Proximity to sources of discarded equipment helps reduce freight costs. "The simple fact," Back Thru said, "is that as new technology becomes less expensive the cost of removing the old technology becomes a major cost factor in an upgrade budget. The value of the old equipment may no longer cover the cost of removal ...

"The cost of recycling has increased dramatically ... with the huge quantities of older equipment displaced in large corporations ... There is not a single biodegradable item in a computer and they don't belong in a landfill. Monitors are actually considered hazardous waste, and in many communities are banned from curbside pickup."

If you want to know more about computer recycling, go to an old link, www.american.edu/projects/mandala/TED/COMPUTER.HTM. The paper on this topic starts off by saying, "When a big electronics company announces a big investment plan, interest usually centers on what products the company would be manufacturing. No one would ask the company what would happen to these products—personal computers, fax machines, microwave ovens, televisions—when they reach the end of their useful lives."

Not too long ago, I watched a TV report about computer waste from a western country being shipped to a remote place in China where people dismantle the machines to get at precious pieces of metal. The result: A horrible wasteland littered with computer debris.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Plan B

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE SCUTTLEBUTT IS THAT THE PRESIDENT called for a meeting last Tuesday and bluntly told the assembled officials, "We mustn't have an election!" Of course, there won't be—because there cannot be—an official confirmation of this story. But some people who claim to be in the know would say it happened, and the rest of us can either believe it or not, depending on one's partisan affiliations. The point of this rumor is what's being widely talked as "Plan B," and its ultimate aim: No elections—at least, not in May next year.

A congressman I asked about the supposed Palace meeting (officially, there was a meeting in the afternoon on constitutional change, but the details haven't been released) denied that there's a Plan B. The Palace, according to him, isn't inclined to sabotage the solicitor general's arguments before the Supreme Court and imperil the so-called people's initiative. And yet, it does seem clear that the House of Representatives is gearing up for a big push. The Supreme Court's skepticism, which clearly showed during the oral arguments also held last Tuesday, suggests to some that the initiative is doomed; in which case, it's time to dust off the House proposal to convene a constituent assembly.

I've often heard that administration support for amendments diverges along two paths. The first is that the President is, at best, ambivalent about both the people's initiative and constituent assembly. The second is that the House leadership isn't keen on the initiative gambit and prefers to take the credit for a plebiscite. In the case of the Palace, the ultimate objective is to secure the executive's influence until 2010 and keep its options open as to whether to stay in power past that date, or enjoy a safe retirement. In the case of the House, it wants to prevent a future prime minister from becoming a powerless fig-leaf, like Cesar Virata was in Marcos' Batasan Pambansa. Both paths converge, politically, where administration officials demand an extension of existing terms, longer future terms and an end to term limits.

Therefore, both the Palace and the House have to pursue the initiative and constituent assembly paths to their logical conclusion, even if that turned out to be a failure. However, the Palace has one more option the present House leadership doesn't have: A constitutional convention—but only if holding a plebiscite before next year's elections proves impossible.

Nothing suggests to me that a plebiscite—if one were allowed by a Supreme Court decision favoring the "people's" initiative, or the House's con-ass—will be a reflection of the people's will. Of course, the public could pull off a miracle by jealously guarding the voting and the counting, but it's not good to rely on miracles taking place. So if we end up with a plebiscite, its results will surely be pleasing to its proponents.

But if the Supreme Court decision bars a plebiscite, the political fallout will be toxic. This seems to be the reasoning behind the President's alleged—and, from what I heard, rather ill-tempered—emphasis on "no election" next year, at all costs. Of course, a constitutional convention can be called; but even if it were packed with administration delegates, it couldn't work faster than a Congress elected in 2007, potentially hostile to the Palace.

The conventional wisdom has been pretty hard-pressed over the past few weeks. Both supporters and opponents of the so-called initiative (as a member of OneVoice, I was a signatory to its petition challenging the initiative proponents before the Supreme Court) have alternated between high and dashed hopes. Other political assumptions are being challenged, too: Among them, that the President can remain ambivalent about constitutional amendments, or that she has the luxury of time; or that the public, at least at the local level, will not exact its vengeance on candidates identified with the administration. Or, the biggest assumption of all, that the majority of the voting public has decided to "move on."

So it seems that Plan B is in the works. It would be interesting to ask: When did the House last muster a quorum? It doesn't seem as if a quorum was evident before Tuesday night when, with uncharacteristic energy, it moved to table the proposal for a constituent assembly and vote on it. As one version of the scuttlebutt puts it, even the interior secretary marshaled his powers to convince congressmen to show up for the roll call; others say, it was the Speaker who scrounged around to provide the reasons for his colleagues to show up for work. (The interior secretary reportedly smells bad at the Palace these days—oddly enough, purportedly because of something which has to do with the various justifications used to oust the mayor of Pasay City. But why on earth this would be so, I can't imagine.)

Now both the Palace and the House can say, come hell or high water, there will be an election next year and not just a plebiscite. The difficulty is that any such pledge wouldn't be worth the paper the press release is printed on. And any such pledge wouldn't affect the ferocity with which a plebiscite will be fought out, before, during and after.

For now, of course, we have to wait. The Supreme Court still has to decide on the initiative question, even as the House explores how to approve a plebiscite question, in the hope that the Comelec in turn operates according to that beloved administration mantra: "Presumption of regularity." If the House calls for a plebiscite, the Comelec can immediately arrange for one, while the Senate questions the move before the Supreme Court. Then the plebiscite results can be announced, and the Supreme Court will be told to shut up—or be stripped of its powers by the new parliament.

Simple treasure

YOUNG BLOOD

Laura Angela Palisoc

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

BOOGIE, OF COURSE, IS A TYPE OF DANCE. BUT IN OUR home, Boogie is a family member who will be turning 10 early next year. He is a loving, caring creature with the blackest eyes you'll ever see.

My youngest brother Reyan and Boogie are bunkmates. In the morning, my brother would tell us about the stories Boogie tells him before they sleep. Ever since Boogie came to our family, they've been glued to each other.

Curiously, Reyan is the typical jock you see around campus. He shoots crumpled pieces of paper into the trash can behind the classroom's door. He surrounds himself with girl classmates during breaks. When there's nothing to do, he raises his arms as if to shoot a basketball and makes whooshing sounds as the imaginary ball goes in. Apparently he suffers from testosterone overload, and yet he is an academic scholar. In fact, he is ranked first in his batch, and second overall in the school. He is a hard candy coat outside, but a soft marshmallowy person inside.

Boogie is a stuffed toy bear made in Sri Lanka and given to me by a very persistent suitor when I was in high school. I didn't like the guy very much. Not that he was bad looking—in fact, he was one of the cute guys in school and an officer in Citizen Army Training. But I avoided him during lunch hour and hid from him when the bell rang to signal the end of classes.

In a way, I hated Boogie then for he reminded me of that suitor. After I got him, I didn't even bother to open the wrapper and asked my mom to put everything right away in our toy cabinet.

Reyan immediately claimed Boogie for his own. He told us that the teddy bear was unloved, and he needed someone to look after him. I gladly consented. It was Reyan who gave Boogie his name.

There are several stuffed toys in our house. Some were given by Lola Inang after her trips to the United States. Others were bought by our parents during our "*Bilmokol*" (*Bili mo akol)* moods. And still others were given by suitors.

My brother has names for all of them: Japorms is a teddy with a big bow and heart patches. Milo is a stuffed, spotted dog. Goody-Goody is a large teddy with glasses. Cha-cha is another bear. All these and a few more are Boogie's friends.

Once, when Boogie was a few months old, my mom thought he smelled funny. (My brother places Boogie near his face when they sleep). So, she gave Boogie a bath by throwing him into the washing machine together with our clothes. The following day, my brother told us that he was sad because Boogie had complained to him that he got dizzy in the spinner. From that time on, Boogie takes luxurious baths in the kitchen sink.

There are rivalries among Boogie and his friends. When Christmas 2004 came, my mom put Japorms on a wreath as part of the decoration. Boogie told Reyan that he wanted to be on the wreath instead. Without any other word being said, Boogie got his wish.

Boogie is smart. He knows how to write his name and read (he studies with us during our periodical exams). He even says that their family is on TV. And I'm sure everyone has watched them: Three brown bears jumping and waving wildly at the sight of milk in a glass.

I have another brother, Sam, who is also an "Isko ng Bayan." He is the naughtiest and most irritating among us siblings. We often refer to him as "*langaw*" because of this. On certain occasions, when he gets into his *langaw* mood, he wrings Boogie's neck, punches it and wrestles it into every conceivable bodily contortion. The more we tell Sam to stop doing it, the more furiously he goes into it. Thus, Boogie gets "hurt" even more.

One time, when my mom saw what Sam was doing, she gave him a scolding. Sam never did it again in her presence.

M&M's are Boogie's favorite chocolate brand. It's the only brand that can fit inside his tiny mouth. He loves the array of colors when we put them in a jar. He says that M&M's were made for him because of the chocolate's color inside the candy shell.

Right now, Boogie is in a paper bag, holding a green paper heart on a stick. He thinks he just arrived from America. Actually, we used the green paper hearts when we fetched my sister at the airport so she could spot us easily among the thousands of welcomers.

A new member has been added to our household recently. He is Gerry the giraffe. He is a print on terry cloth. He hangs from my brother's window and used as a curtain. Every week, my mom tapes a couple of leaves under Gerry's mouth for him to eat. These days his fare consists of guava and mango leaves.

Boogie has helped our family in a lot of ways, especially when there is need for laughter. He is there when someone is sad. He sometimes becomes the referee when my siblings fight. He is some kind of chain that holds us together in good times and bad.

I would like to thank the guy who gave me a toy bear about a decade ago. It is sad that it took me years to appreciate this person who did me no wrong and only meant well. I am hoping that he gets to read this, because I want to let him know that he has given me and my family a simple treasure which is worth a million thanks.

Laura Angela Palisoc, 23, is a BS Public Health graduate of the University of the Philippines Manila.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Heroes forever

"One moment, ordinary citizens, and the next, heroes forever. We mourn their loss, to be sure, but we also celebrate their victory here in the first battle on terrorism."

—Retired Gen. Tommy Franks, referring to the passengers of Flight 93, who, on Sept. 11, 2001, fought hijackers and forced them to crash the plane into the ground

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No. 1 source of corruption

I AGREE WITH SEN. PANFILO Lacson—the pork barrel system in the country is a "rich source of corruption among legislators." According to Lacson, "It (pork barrel) is evil. It is a great source of graft that cuts across all levels of the legislative and executive branches of the government."

I am not exactly a Lacson fan but I am with him in calling the public to condemn the pork barrel, the country's No. 1 source of graft and corruption. Our lawmakers have restored the amount of pork barrel from P120 million to P200 million for each senator, and from P40 million to P70 million for each House member.

Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House Committee on Finance said that the pork barrel (again renamed as the Countrywide Development Fund or CDF), in the 2007 budget (P21 billion) is a "reasonable" amount since next year is election season. We all know that election time is vote-buying time for most politicians who use their pork barrel fund to get reelected. What lavish and wasteful spending the country is up to with the improper and immoral use of the taxpayers' hard-earned money!

The pork barrel will not promote the welfare of the Filipino people. Instead, it will just line the pockets of corrupt government officials. Being a taxpayer, I strongly denounce the allocation of billions of pesos for pork barrel.

The pork barrel is an evil fund, an evil means to promote an evil end.

—RAUL F. AGCAOILI,
Marikina City

AMA clarifies erroneous claims

IN HIS SEPT. 19 COLUMN, Conrado Banal suggested that AMA Computer College-Makati Inc. had to vacate its school premises due to a closure order issued by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). This, according to him, has prompted the building owner to file a multimillion-peso damage suit against AMA.

This is patently false. AMA Computer College continues to operate its nursing school by virtue of the permit issued by the CHED on June 21, 2006. That permit supersedes the provisional permit issued on June 18, 2004. The nursing school is now housed in the AMA Building located at 5486 South Superhighway, Makati. We decided to terminate our lease on the former location due to the completion of the AMA Building. The move allows us to reallocate P1.25 million, previously spent on monthly rental cost, for the purchase/installation of better facilities for our nursing students at our new building.

As the lease contract carried the usual exit clauses, we turned over the property to the building owner's representatives on April 30, 2006—not to barangay officials—as Banal, again, erroneously claimed. The building owner, however, unjustifiably refused to receive the property despite our prior notice.

We find it regrettable that Banal did not bother to check his facts before writing about our nursing school. This is disappointing because we have always held the INQUIRER and its opinion writers in high regard. Still, we look forward to more responsible reporting and commentaries in the future.

—DARWIN V. DOMINGUEZ,
vice president for operations,
AMA Education System,
AMA Building II,
59 Panay Ave., 1103 Quezon City

Petron guilty of skimping

HERE IS AN ANALOGY WHICH makes me believe why Petron is mainly responsible for the oil spill off Guimaras.

Suppose a wealthy woman in the food business wants to transport some food to the next town. Wanting to save on transportation costs, she hires a poor, sick man to take a heavy, huge pot of cooked food to the next town.

The poor man takes a public jeep for the next town. Being too weak to carry the pot properly, he spills its contents on the jeepney floor and on some passengers.

Who should take responsibility for dirtying the jeep and the passengers? The sick man who transported the food or the wealthy woman who hired the services of the sick man?

—NOLI REYES,
noli@math.upd.edu.ph

Other ways to fight cervical cancer

RINA JIMINEZ-DAVID'S COLUMN, "How many women will have to die?" (PDI, 9/16/06) incorrectly assumes Gardasil, the cervical cancer (papilloma virus) vaccine, will save lives. It has not been proven to save lives. It does reduce infection from two common strains of papilloma virus, but eventually, with sexual contact, women may be infected with other virus strains.

Women still need Pap smears. Women should still refrain from multiple sex partners. Women are still at risk for other sexually transmitted infections like herpes and chlamydia. Women should know that the papilloma virus comes and goes. Women should be campaigning to fortify foods with folic acid and vitamin C, which quell this virus. These vitamins inhibit all strains of the virus, unlike the vaccine.

—BILL SARDI,
Bill Sardi's Knowledge of Health Inc., San Dimas, California, USA,
bsardi@aol.com,

Full, unabashed public display of tyrannic rule

I DEEPLY MOURNED THE UNtimely demise of the second impeachment case filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo by learned members of society, although it was a rehash from the one filed last year.

I am not against the President as she seems sincere in piloting the ship of State to a brighter tomorrow for the generations yet unborn just as her late father, then President Diosdado Macapagal did in the 1960s, to win the hearts of his countrymen.

It was, however, plain hypocrisy for the House majority to dismiss the impeachment without giving the complainants (who were the people themselves, not opposition congressmen) the opportunity to present evidence. It was tyranny of the majority in full, unabashed public display.

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA SR.,
JP Rizal Street,
Barangay Camambugan,
Daet, Camarines Norte 4600

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POPE Benedict in a dialogue with Muslim envoys

REUTERS

Row over Pope's speech stresses need for inter-faith dialogue

IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT THE LUminaries of the Islamic faith came out with open statements in defense of Mohammed's version of the jihad.

Muslims described Pope Benedict XVI's quoted words as "deplorable." Precisely, now is the hour for Muslims not only to disclaim, condemn or demand an apology but, more so, to clarify the very practice that causes them and the world at large so much trouble and confusion.

Dedicated Christians and Muslims alike, ruled by their faith, commit themselves to preach and to live what they preach. Yet, why do we find the likes of Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, the Abu Sayyaf members and the so-called suicide bombers, among others, lurking behind and roaming around? Should we ask our Muslim friends to apologize, too, for all the terror and destruction wrought by the misguided elements in their ranks? But are the characters mentioned above "misguided" really? If not, by what codes or standards should they be exonerated? Such bothersome questions remain unanswered.

While Christians, in all denominations, link vioience and senseless killings to anything hut holy, Muslims may have their own arguments, or may stand by the literal meaning of jihad (holy war) written in the Koran. Hence, in order to ease tensions and bridge the gaps, there must be a search-in, a link, a common understanding between religions, called ecumenism. Efforts on both sides must lead to an inter-faith dialogue called for by the Pope.

For one, Catholic Christians uphold, or at least try to uphold holiness and uprightness even next to godliness with the banner—not a sword—of love, justice and peace.

—LOURDES OBEN SANTOS, OP,
Dominican Laity,
Sto. Domingo Chapter,
Quezon Boulevard, Quezon City

JPE deserves to be chair of human rights committee

FOR DERIDING AS MERE "MILItary adventurers" the soldiers who, along with now Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, risked their lives to restore Philippine democracy in 1986, the INQUIRER editorial of Sept. 18 betrayed the big role this paper played during People Power I.

If not for People Power I, during which the military assumed its rightful role as protector of the people, the INQUIRER may no longer be here today. It should be pointed out that Edsa II was also successful because the military again served as a catalyst of societal change.

On the other hand, the failed attempts to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo through Edsa-like mass actions only showed that—in the Philippines, at least—no people power would be successful without the military withdrawing support from an unpopular government.

Likewise, the editorial seemed to have confused cause-and-effect when it stated: "On Feb. 22, 1986, facing arrest by forces loyal to the dictator, he (Enrile) broke away from the Marcos regime."

Lest we revise history, it must be said that the very reason then President Marcos wanted to arrest Enrile was that the latter had broken away from his regime. It was not at all a case of Enrile breaking away from Marcos because he was facing arrest. With that singular act that ended a dark chapter of Philippine history, whatever role Enrile played in the Marcos years should now be buried since he has already redeemed himself thrice over. There should already be closure as far as this matter is concerned.

There is no sense to be vindictive and to be judgmental toward one who has given all his life to the service of this nation. At the Senate, Enrile is the epitome of a 24/7 guy—someone who opens and closes the Senate while many other lawmakers are nowhere to be found. Enrile has become the only constant in the Senate—rarely failing to attend hearings of committees that he chairs or he is a member of, and ever ready to tangle with anyone during legislative deliberations.

I believe Enrile has the integrity and soundness of judgment to serve as chair of the Senate committee on human rights, or of any other committee, for that matter.

—MARY ANNE MAMINTA,
L5 B10 Albania St.,
Annex 40, Better Living Subd.,
Parañaque City

Postpone Cha-cha

RECENT EVENTS AND THE DIRECT INVOLVEment of top politicians in Charter change initiatives clearly justify the postponement of Cha-cha to some future date, after the 2007 elections.

Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. of Makati performed a courageous and patriotic act when he publicly called the people's initiative and the proposed Constituent Assembly as an "FVR-De Venecia Productions" that is being undertaken with the consent and tolerance of the Arroyo administration. Locsin, together with some members of the opposition, condemned the railroading of Resolution No. 1230 by the House Committed on Constitutional Amendments. The resolution authorizes Congress to convene as a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of revising or amending the Constitution.

Rep. Roilo Golez branded the hasty approval of the resolution as irregular. The members of the committee were not given copies of the resolution, much less reasonable time to discuss and debate on the very important resolution and its attached draft Constitution. Rep. Liza Maza of Gabriela called the resolution a "Frankenstein Monster." Senate President Manuel Villar agreed with Sen. Joker Arroyo that the resolution is the "last-ditch attempt to either postpone or cancel next year's elections."

Columnist Neal H. Cruz suggested the postponement of Cha-cha because "The House shamelessly approved the resolution to convene Congress as a Constituent Assembly—without the participation of the Senate—and change the Constitution. Everybody knows that this is unconstitutional, including congressmen many of whom are lawyers, but they brazenly went ahead and approved an unconstitutional proposal. This is clearly an abuse of their powers." (PDI, 9/8/06)

In view of the partisan involvement of top politicians in the Cha-cha initiatives, and the preparation for the 2007 elections—any move to revise or amend our Constitution between now and up to the 2007 elections—will be tainted with suspicions that it is motivated by a hidden and selfish political agenda.

In order to insulate Cha-cha from partisan politics, it is advisable to do it through the transparent, broadly participatory and less divisive Constitutional Convention.

—LEOPOLDO T. CAUSING,
Iloilo convenor, Citizens Movement
for a Federal Philippines,
46 Mission Rd. Ext., La Paz, Iloilo City

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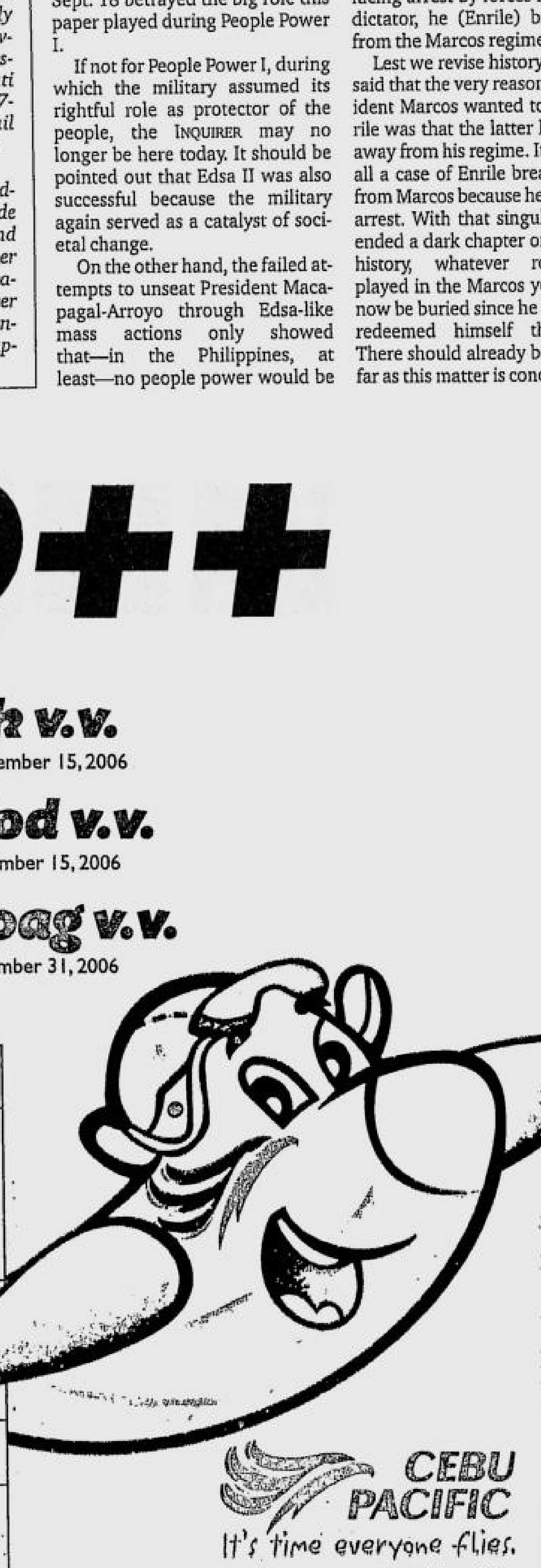

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100 GIs held at Zambo immigration

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AT LEAST 114 US SERVICEMEN from Guam were briefly held at the Zamboanga International Airport (ZIA) on Tuesday afternoon after they failed to produce travel clearances from the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID).

Immigration officials, who requested anonymity, said the American servicemen arrived here from Guam aboard a Boeing 757, which was chartered from the North American Airlines, around 4 p.m.

"There was some sort of problem in their clearance papers. We were informed that an official from Guam approved their clearance," the officer said.

Supt. Ivar Padao, chief of the Aviation Security Group, said the US servicemen were allowed to proceed to the military's Camp Arturo Enrile in Barangay Malagutay here about three hours later.

The problem, he said, was also resolved.

Matthew Lussenhop, press attaché of the US Embassy in Manila, told the INQUIRER the troops were sent here as part of the "normal rotation" of soldiers under the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP).

"Normally they don't arrive by chartered flights. Most of the time, they use commercial flights," he said.

Lussenhop said the problem with the immigration department was only temporary and that the troops were later allowed entry to the Philippines.

Col. Antonio Supnet, Task Force Zamboanga chief, said he did not know where the US servicemen will be deployed.

"It was not coordinated with me. I don't know anything about their arrangement," he said. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

Treasurer, 3 others face public fund theft raps

SAN NICOLAS, ILOCOS NORTE—State auditors have recommended the filing of charges against the town treasurer here and three collectors after they were found to have failed to remit more than P6.3 million in government funds for a seven-month period beginning December last year.

The Commission on Audit also ordered municipal treasurer Evelyn Badua and collection officers Maria Concepcion Manuel, Carmelita Marcos and Jerome Zabala to refund the amount.

Ignacia Medrano, the audit team leader, conducted the investigation from July 3 to 31 this year and covered accounts beginning December last year to July this year.

Mayor Alfredo Valdez said a fact-finding committee he created would come out with a separate report on the cash shortfall.

Valdez said the committee was created because of reports that the amount of government funds missing could be bigger and more people could be involved in the shortfall.

"We suspected that there was more to uncover. This has been going on for years. There's a mafia inside [the treasurer's office]," he said.

Medrano, in her report, said the cash accountabilities of the employees were not final because payments of big establishments operating in the town have not been reconciled with their records.

Based on the COA's findings, the cash accountabilities of the employees consisted of the following: Badua (P3,574,333), Marcos (P1,868,383), Manuel (P858,814) and Zabala (P91,595) or a total of P6,393,125.

Out of the cash shortage, the employees have so far returned some P585,115. They have since been assigned in the provincial treasurer's office for a month after COA began its investigation.

The COA report said the amounts involved "were not turned over to the liquidating officer and remained in the hands of the collectors or spent by them for their personal needs."

The commission said every collector had an access to a record book and they could have written the dates of remittance even without the corresponding actual remittance.

"Most of the receipts issued [by collectors] were not dated to conceal the actual dates of collection, bringing confusion as to the veracity of actual collections," the report said.

The COA also noted deceit in the employees' practice of canceling the original copy of a receipt without canceling the duplicate and triplicate copies and the issuance of receipts without using carbon papers.

"They write only on the original copy what is actually received and write a lesser amount [on the duplicate/triplicate copies] and pocket the difference," it added.

The commission asked the acting town treasurer to closely supervise collection officers and clerks and require them to submit their collections to the liquidating officer daily before the close of business hours.

It also asked the treasurer to deposit all collections with the authorized depository bank. *Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

EDUCATION
Muslim students listen to English lessons by radio at the Kilangan Elementary School in Pagalungan, Maguindanao. The project is being carried out by a New York-based nonprofit organization and the Catholic school Notre Dame University.

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DENR continues fish cage demolition as deadline draws near

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONment and Natural Resources continued to demolish illegal fish pens and fish cages in Laguna Lake as its deadline for the structures' demolition on Sept. 30 drew near.

In a statement, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes also appealed to local authorities, police and agents of other national government agencies to be vigilant to prevent the re-emergence of illegal fish pens and fish cages in the lake.

The DENR, jointly with the Laguna Lake Development Authority, launched a campaign to rid Laguna Lake of illegal fish structures starting Sept. 1.

So far, the two agencies have freed some 150 hectares of Laguna Lake from the illegal structures. Reyes led the drive as head of the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF).

Reyes said the illegal fish pens and fish cages were causing pollution in the bay due to overstocking of fish, threatening the survival of the fishing industry in the lake.

The illegal structures also drastically reduced the usual catch of fishermen, causing economic losses to them and their families. Fish pens occupy five hectares, while fish cages occupy just one hectare of lake water.

"We must not allow the reversal of our gains in successfully demolishing illegal fish pens and cages to save the lake," Reyes said. "The demolition operations have not only enabled small fishermen to gain more fishing space, they have likewise contributed immensely in reducing pollution of the lake brought about by overstocking of fish and unsafe fish farming practices."

Environment Undersecretary Roy Kyamko, deputy NAECTF chief, said only 17 hectares are still occupied by fish structures.

A similar campaign is ongoing in Batangas where mayors are now drafting a common ordinance to regulate fish cage operations.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Taal Volcano Protected Landscape–Protected Area Management Board (TVPL-PAMB) and environmental nongovernment organization Tanggol Kalikasan (TK) facilitated the ongoing ordinance consultation, which started last Thursday in Mataas na Kahoy town.

The unified ordinance likewise seeks to create zoning guidelines for fish cages and fish sanctuary areas, regulate use of fish gears and boats and enforce other relative rules for the lake biological diversity conservation.

The BFAR expects to finish the ordinance by December.

Taal Lake, which has a total surface area of 24,356 hectares and average depth of 60.41 meters, is the country's third largest lake—next to Laguna Lake and Lanao Lake.

It is surrounded by 11 cities and two cities in Batangas.

In 1996, the national government declared Taal Lake and Taal Volcano a protected area under the National Integrated Protected Areas System Law or Republic Act No. 7586 by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 906. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

ALTERNATIVE

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Residents of Barangay Guiwanon in Nueva Valencia, Guimaras turn to small farms for their alternative livelihood after they lost their main source of income, fishing, as a result of the Petron oil spill that wreaked havoc in Guimaras province. Some fishermen earned P15,000 a day from fishing but they have since been driven to depending on relief goods following the oil spill.

Villagers discover toxic dump

LUCENA CITY—A DUMP OF hazardous chemical waste was discovered in the village of Mangilag Norte, Candelaria town in Quezon province, an official of the nationwide environmentalist group Tanggol Kalikasan (TK) said Tuesday.

Juliet Aparicio, TK program officer, said more than 90 plastic and steel drums containing different kinds of chemicals like sulfuric acid, paint, among many other factory waste, were found in the vicinity of the dumping site.

"Some of the containers have labels that read—hazardous waste. The smell was unbearable," Aparicio said in a mobile phone interview.

The dumping site, that has five manmade pits measuring two by three meters in diameter and at least three meters deep, was discovered inside a coconut plantation in Sitio 3 of the village, some 2 km from the Maharlika Highway.

"The three pits were already filled with different kinds of chemical waste and were now covered. The two other pits were beginning to be dumped with newly arrived chemicals. The chemicals were just being poured into the dumping ground and then covered when filled," she said.

Some of the drums bore labels that read Light Industry and Science Park located in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Aparicio said residents saw the drums being brought to the site by trucks.

She quoted village chair Efren Florendo as denying knowledge that what was being dumped in the area were chemical waste materials.

TK received the information from Caloy Reyes, the Candelaria municipal environment and natural resources officer.

"Some of residents in the area could no longer bear the stench coming from the chemicals so they brought the matter to the attention of the local government," she added.

The dumping of the chemicals started a week ago, Aparicio said quoting the residents. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

THE LABEL in one of the drums says it all.

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General says eggs won't ruin visit of UP head at PMA

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO City—No eggs will land on University of the Philippines president Emerlinda Roman when she is given a tour of the Philippine Military Academy on Saturday.

This was the assurance of Lt. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent, following the experience of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. at the UP Diliman campus last week when he was hit with eggs by some students.

Maligalig said the PMA Corps of Cadets is giving Roman an honor parade on Saturday in its bid to renew ties with the state university.

A video footage showed the eggs hitting Esperon as he walked out of a conference hall after speaking at a forum sponsored by an organization of political science students on Sept. 22.

Esperon reacted days later by declaring that the incident revealed the UP students' lack of breeding. The University Student Council refused to apologize to Esperon.

"I am certain the cadets will always be disciplined... PMA and UP Baguio have always had a cordial relationship," said UP Baguio Chancellor Priscilla Macansantos, who was also invited to the PMA ceremony.

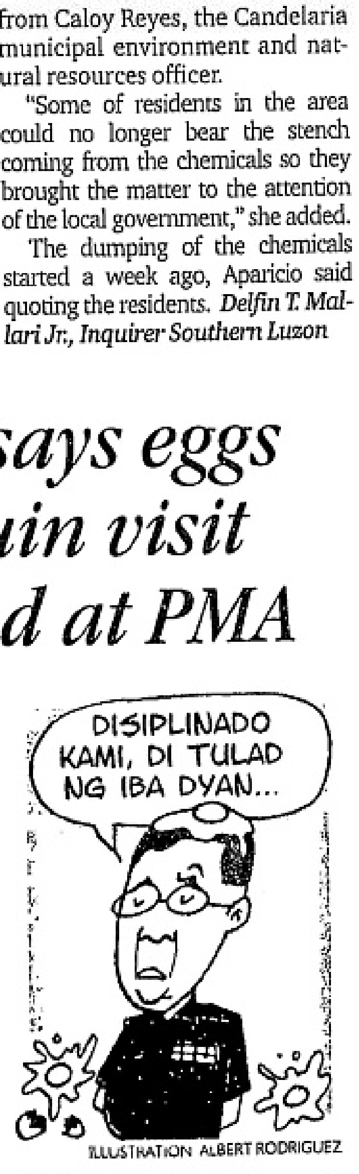
DISIPLINADO KAMI, DI TULAD NG IBA DYAN...

ILLUSTRATION ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Maligalig said the egg-throwing incident "is not an issue [because] the UP president already talked to the chief of staff [and] the [students involved in the incident] do not make up the whole UP system."

The cadets had not reacted formally to the episode, according to a PMA professor.

But some cadets, he said, raised it during classroom discussions because the incident was in the news.

NQUIRER Southern zon
E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

A DIVER interacts with a whale shark in the waters off Legazpi City.
PHOTO COURTESY OF GAVIN NEWMAN/GREENPEACE

Double treat: Mayon + whale sharks

By Dave O. Valdes
Legazpi City

WHALE SHARKS ARE incredible creatures. Aside from being the largest fish in the world, growing to a length of over 40 feet, they feed almost exclusively on krill and plankton. How they get to that size on such a microscopic diet has fascinated biologists, divers and nature lovers for years.

Until recently, spotting whale sharks was akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Conservationists discovered a few years ago that whale sharks frequented Donsol, Sorsogon where the locals call them "*butanding*."

Recently, news that whale sharks were spotted 15 minutes from Legazpi City in Albay prompted my family to take a trip to the famed capital under the shadow of the imposing Mayon. With the volcano having a mini-eruption, we figured that even if we were unlucky spotting the *butanding*, we could at least catch the breathtaking sight of Mayon spewing lava.

We arrived in the late afternoon just in time to view Mayon's majesty. By nightfall, glowing rocks and trickles of lava could be seen slowly seeping from the volcano's crater and moving down its perfectly gentle slopes.

"Are we sure we're far enough, Dad?" Kiko, my 12-year-old son asked with an anxious look on his face.

Thankfully, Mayon's show of restiveness was relatively mild this year. The city's tourism council even had streamers inviting tourists to witness the "2006 Mayon Eruption."

Encounter

The next day, we had breakfast in a little thatched hut along the black sand beach of Barangay Bigaa. The locals had just begun to organize themselves to cope with the expected onrush of tourists.

Each boat was required to have a Butanding Interaction Officer (BIO) to guide and regulate the animal interactions. A few boats were already out searching the waters. The excitement was palpable.

The paddle-powered "*sibid-sibid*" is a perfect boat to silently approach the shy *butanding*, but I was apprehensive, knowing it would take hours to cover the area.

Even when Joe, our boatman, signaled a sighting, I was skeptical. Boatmen, though, have a way of seeing things that a typical tourist would never see until the last minute. But it seemed the *butanding* were not surfacing long enough to give us a chance to swim with them.

Just before noon though, that all changed. A jumble of boats gathered around a single spot and shouts of glee were the unmistakable signs that something was up.

Tips

GOING TO SEE THE *BUTANDING* of Legazpi? Bring a life jacket, swimming goggles or mask, and a pair of fins.

In the water, the sandy floor slopes down steeply just meters from the shore so be prepared to jump into clear waters without seeing the bottom. Most boats are not motorized, so be prepared to use a paddle.

If you are a strong swimmer, you will get to see the whale sharks longer. If not, you'll need some luck and a good BIO to place you in the path of the slow swimming creatures. Look for Joe in Barangay Bigaa. He has the uncanny ability of spotting *butanding* even before they surface.

From about 200 meters, I saw the dorsal fin and a tail briefly break surface. Swimmers began jumping in the water. I donned my mask and fins and slipped into the water to where I thought the whale shark would surface away from all the tourists.

Within seconds, a juvenile not more than 15 feet in length passed slowly a few feet away from me. Its tiny eyes looking straight at me, it turned and went back toward the swimmers and boats. Chasing it, I found myself in the middle of at least 20 swimmers ogling the creature. I saw my nervous son on a *sibid-sibid* and talked him into the water.

Interaction

When he finally jumped in with me, another *butanding* had appeared. It was an adult 20-footer with a heavily scarred dorsal and caudal fin, old wounds unmistakably from an encounter with a boat propeller. We christened her "Putol" because of her wounds.

In the gin-clear water, Kiko met his first *butanding* and with a gasp, he exclaimed, "It's so B-I-G!" Accompanying the shark were smaller fish called remoras that can attach themselves onto sharks with a suction-like feature at the top of their heads.

Trianna, my 7-year-old daughter, was also in the water being pulled by my wife excitedly toward the smaller shark. The BIO had warned us not to touch it or shout out loud at first sight because it might get spooked.

True enough, my daughter hardly said a word in the water although her eyes were never wider. Later, she exclaimed to Elena, "Did you hear me screaming in my head, Mom?"

We nicknamed the juvenile whale shark "*Kulit*" because it was the most playful. Once, Kulit went by the shoreline not more than 10 meters from the beach. Another time, it went under the *sibid-sibid*, gently nudged it, and slowly lifted the skiff almost out of the water.

My nephew, Andy was swimming in the late afternoon when he spotted the biggest *butanding* yet. We took turns chasing the female behemoth that must have been over 30 feet in length.

The next day, she was again spotted, this time with a similar-sized whale shark tailing it. Putol was there, too. The three circled slowly in the midst of at least a dozen swimmers, truly an amazing sight.

As we reluctantly packed up at the end of the second day, you could see the locals pride in playing host to satisfied visitors. Our hospitable hosts jokingly called us "*lokal-poren*" (local-foreign) to differentiate us from the foreign tourists already making their way to Legazpi.

Why do these animals frequent Legazpi and Donsol? Are they feeding? Are they mating? Are the *butanding* of Legazpi actually the ones in Donsol? These are exciting questions that researchers need to answer.

Donsol's whale sharks are plentiful from December to May, while those in Legazpi seem to congregate from June onwards, making whale-shark-watching a year-round event in Bicol.

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Dengue spares no one, says DOH chief

PROTECTION. Fourth-graders recite in their class at the Barangka Elementary School in Marikina City wearing jogging pants under their school uniforms as protection from dengue. RAFFY LERMA

Jinggoy's son still in hospital

By TJ Burgonio and Jerome Aning

THE CONDITION OF OPPOSITION Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's 13-year-old son has stabilized, but he remained in the hospital for treatment of dengue, which his father said he could have contracted at his school in San Juan.

"He's OK; his fever is subsiding," Estrada said of son Joseph Luis Manuel, the second of his four children.

The senator's son, a seventh grader at Xavier School in Greenhills, was discharged from the Cardinal Santos Medical Center on Tuesday and transferred to the San Juan Medical Center.

"The reason for the transfer was because there were a lot of cases at Cardinal Santos. And since his resistance was weak, we decided to transfer him to the San Juan Medical Center," Estrada, son of deposed President Joseph Estrada, told reporters.

The Estradas brought the boy to the hospital on Wednesday last week, after school officials advised him to go home because he was running a high fever. The doctors found him positive for dengue.

"It's a good thing we brought him early because he was running a high fever that hovered from 40 to 41 degree Celsius then dropped to 37 only to rise to 39, 40. That was really very, very bothersome," the senator said, recalling his son's first day at the hospital.

Estrada believed that his son contracted dengue at his school. "I already wrote the principal to take the necessary measures to avoid future incidents," he said.

In a press conference, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III reiterated that nobody is safe from contracting dengue.

"Dengue chooses no one; it chooses no socio-economic class, age," said the health chief.

Duque revealed he himself had dengue in 1995.

The Secretary said he knew right away that he would have dengue because he was conscious of being bitten by a mosquito as he was having his car repaired in a dark dingy place one day.

"I was wearing shorts and it was 10 a.m. in the morning then I got bitten by this nasty-looking mosquito which began sucking to his full satisfaction."

He said he later had a 40-degree Celsius fever that kept him bedridden for a week. He described the fever as "bone-breaking" and recounted how rashes began appearing all over his body, all dengue symptoms.

Duque said he was no longer confined in a hospital because his wife, who was also a doctor, took care of him.

He added that although a patient may or may not opt for confinement, those suspected of having dengue should be brought to the hospital for assessment.

Duque said the display and severity of symptoms vary according to the type of dengue strain, as well as the patient's state of nutrition and immune system.

Theoretically, he added, a person with a strong immune system could be exposed to all four strains and not get sick at all.

Normally, a dengue patient would only develop immunity for one type, although there have been studies showing that exposure to one translates to immunity to all four.

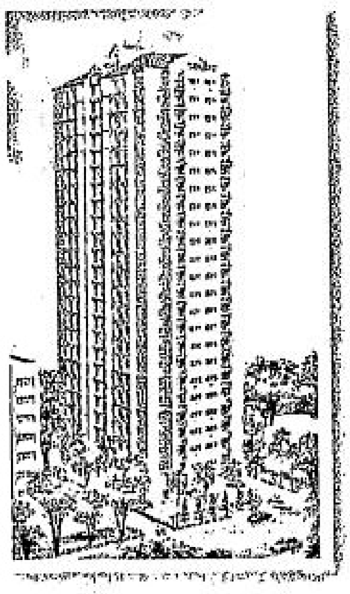
A vaccine is being developed for all strains and may be available by 2010, he added.

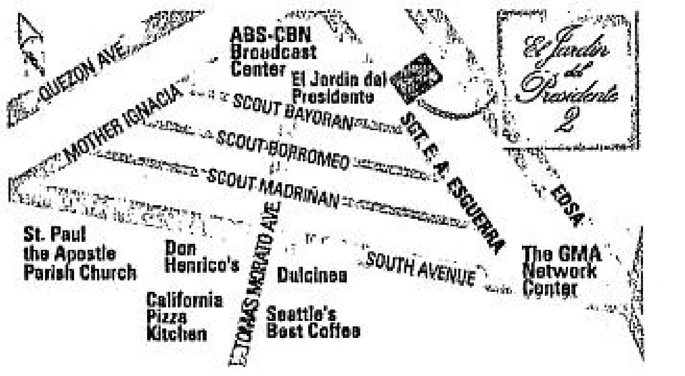
Health officials have reported some 16,932 dengue cases from January to September 16 this year. Being closely monitored is the province of Rizal where the incidence has been notably high.

Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the DOH's National Epidemiology Center, said the figures may go up to 20,000 cases before year-end. Tayag, however, said the fatality rate remained relatively low at two percent, and the projected number of cases for 2006 is still about 40 percent less than last year's 33,000.

Earlier, Tayag said the spread of dengue will likely stop in October, when the rainy season ends.

Meanwhile, everyone is advised to clean their homes and backyards of possible breeding grounds of dengue-causing mosquitoes. *With reports from Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*





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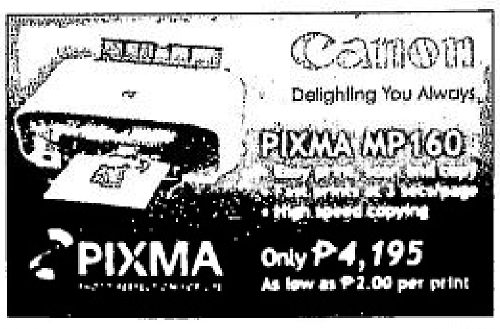
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Ombudsman sues Binay for graft

COA report showed alleged anomalies in ₱231-M furniture deal

By Norman Bordadora and Tarra V. Quismundo

GRAFT CHARGES WERE FILED at the Sandiganbayan yesterday against Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, his wife Elenita and several other individuals for the alleged anomalous purchase of furniture worth P231 million for the new City Hall from 1999 to 2001.

The case against the Binays, filed by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, was based on a complaint filed in 2003 by the mayor's political rival, Roberto Brillante, based on a Commission on Audit report.

The COA report showed that the bidding process for the transaction was allegedly rigged to favor certain companies and that the furniture purchased were overpriced by over P53 million.

Elenita was the Makati mayor in 1999 to 2001 when the transaction was made. Binay, on the other hand, took over the deal when he assumed the post in the latter half of 2001.

Also named as respondents in the complaint were former city councilor Salvador Pangilinan, city administrator Nicanor Santiago Jr., former city treasurer Luz Yamane and general services department chief Ernesto Aspillaga.

BINAY RUDY ESPERAS

Charges were likewise filed against Li Yee Shing, Jason Li, and Vivian Edurise, corporate officers of Office Gallery International Inc. (OGII); Beda Aquino, chief executive officer and Bernadette Aquino, corporate officer of Asia Concept International Inc. (ACII) and several John and Jane Does.

Records of the case showed that the COA had found irregularities in the bidding and awarding of the purchase orders worth over P231 million to OGII and ACII.

It also discovered that the purchases were overpriced by over P53 million and that excessive purchases worth over P50 million were also made, resulting in "undue injury to the government."

According to the COA, the companies that were awarded the purchase orders—OGII, ACII and MFT International Co.—all had the same group of owners.

When reached by the INQUIRER, Binay said that he would first study the case filed against him before making any comment.

"I don't know what the case is all about because I have yet to receive a copy. I will have to call my lawyers and discuss it with them. We'll have to go over the findings of the Ombudsman first," he added.

Binay, who also heads the United Opposition, said he would abide by the legal process and face the charges.

"*Inaaraw-araw na tayo eh* ... (This is becoming a daily thing). But we will follow procedure," the mayor told the INQUIRER.

The filing of the case came a day after Binay filed his reply to an administrative case slapped against him by Brillante, this time over the alleged existence of ghost employees in the City Hall payroll.

In a press conference yesterday, Binay said he and his co-respondents—Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado and the city's 16 councilors—complied on Tuesday with Malacañang's order for them to file their reply to the complaint.

The mayor had said in a previous press briefing that he may be next on the list of opposition mayors to be suspended by the government, after Pasay Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad.

MANGAOANG REM ZAMORA

Tulfo brothers charged with extortion, grave threats

By Tina G. Santos

A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL YESTERday filed charges of extortion and grave threats against INQUIRER columnist Ramon Tulfo and his brother, Raffy.

In a complaint filed in the office of Manila Assistant Prosecutor Eufrosino Sulla, Bureau of Customs district collector Ma. Lourdes Mangaoang—who is assigned to the Port of Iloilo—accused the Tulfos of extorting money from her after she sued Chinese importer Le Peng Wee in 2001.

According to Mangaoang, she filed charges against the trader, whom she said was a close friend of Ramon Tulfo, after BOC officials seized 39 drums of chemicals allegedly used in making methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu in June 2000. Mangaoang was then the district collector in the Port of Zamboanga.

The shipment, she added, was consigned to Wee, former President Joseph Estrada's adviser on economic matters in Mindanao.

Mangaoang said that when the charges were filed against Wee, Ramon called her up and asked her to withdraw the case. He threatened to come up with a series of exposés against her if she refused, she added.

When she ignored his demand, Mangaoang said Raffy called her up, urged her to drop the case and demanded money from her.

Concerned about her family's reaction to an exposé about her, Mangaoang said she deposited P5,000 in the bank account of Raffy's wife, Jocelyn Pua, who was also named as a respondent in the case.

She added that Raffy called her up again and demanded P500,000. She said that after a series of negotiations, the Tulfos agreed to settle for P300,000 but she only managed to raise P100,000.

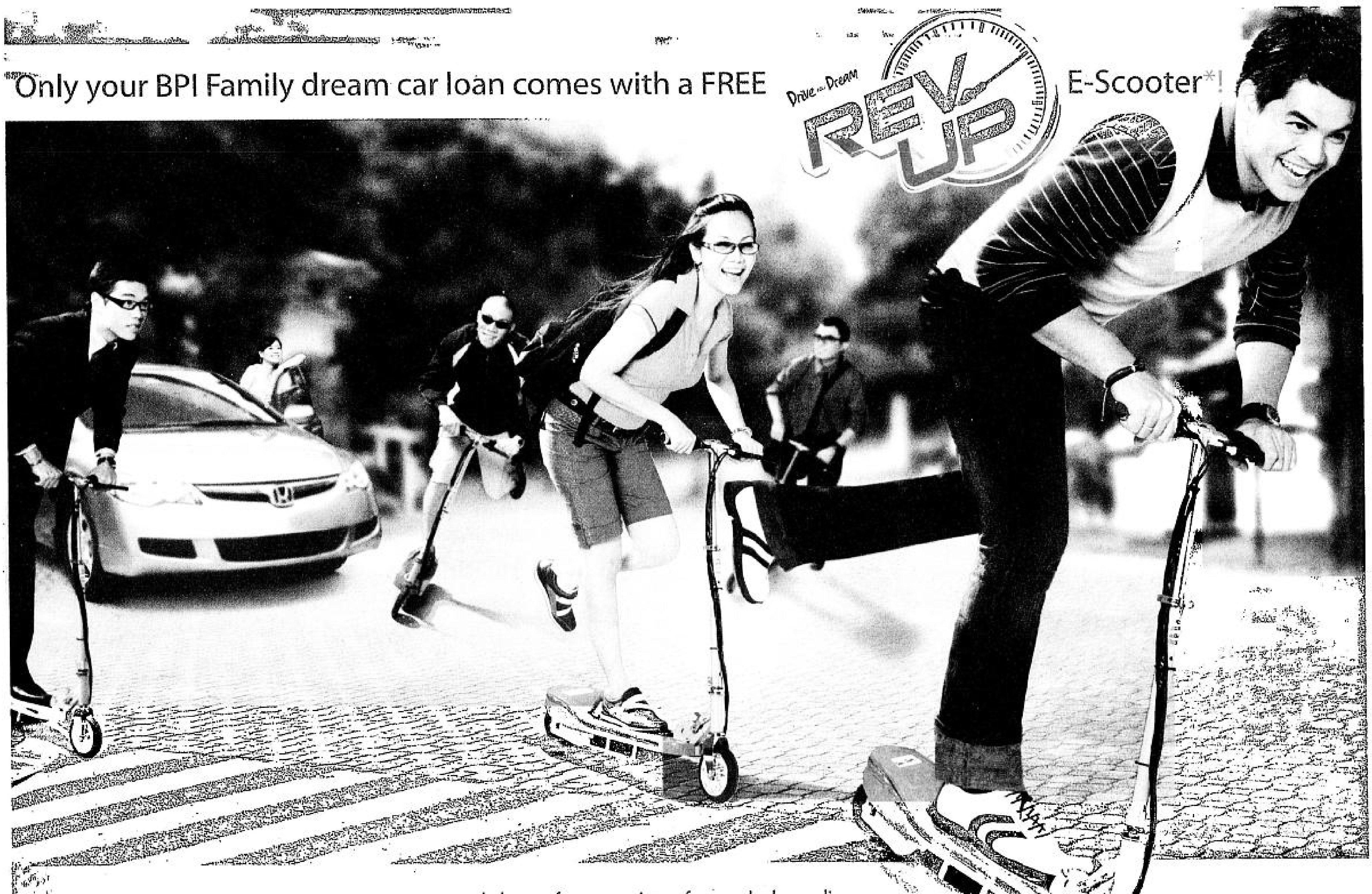
Mangaong said that when she failed to pay the balance, Ramon criticized her in his columns in the INQUIRER, insinuating that she was being used by the Lobregats against Wee.

She added that Raffy also hit her in his column in another newspaper. To satisfy the Tulfos, she said she made several deposits in Pua's account, the amounts ranging from P5,000 to P10,000.

The Tulfos, meanwhile, denied Mangaoang's accusations.

Ramon said, "Why did it take her so long to file a case against me? She filed the case against Wee in 2001. Her motive is questionable. Either she's riding with the tide or trying to curry favor with (First Gentleman) Mike Arroyo."

Raffy, on the other hand, described Mangaoang as a "very, very close friend." He confirmed that she deposited money twice in his wife's account but it was done voluntarily and to help the people who had sought his help through his public service programs.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Infighting continues to split Red Cross-QC chapter

By DJ Yap

IN A SIGN THAT THE POWER struggle within the Philippine National Red Cross-Quezon City chapter will not be resolved anytime soon, its chair Dante Liban has announced his intention to file a P50 million libel suit against his accuser, the chapter administrator.

The former Quezon City congressman said he would press charges against PNRC-QC administrator Annie Torres, two days after she accused him of stealing more than P11 million from the organization.

The charges stemmed from a long-standing dispute between PNRC and its Quezon City chapter. Both are fighting for control over the chapter funds, with the mother organization refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the current board of directors chaired by Liban.

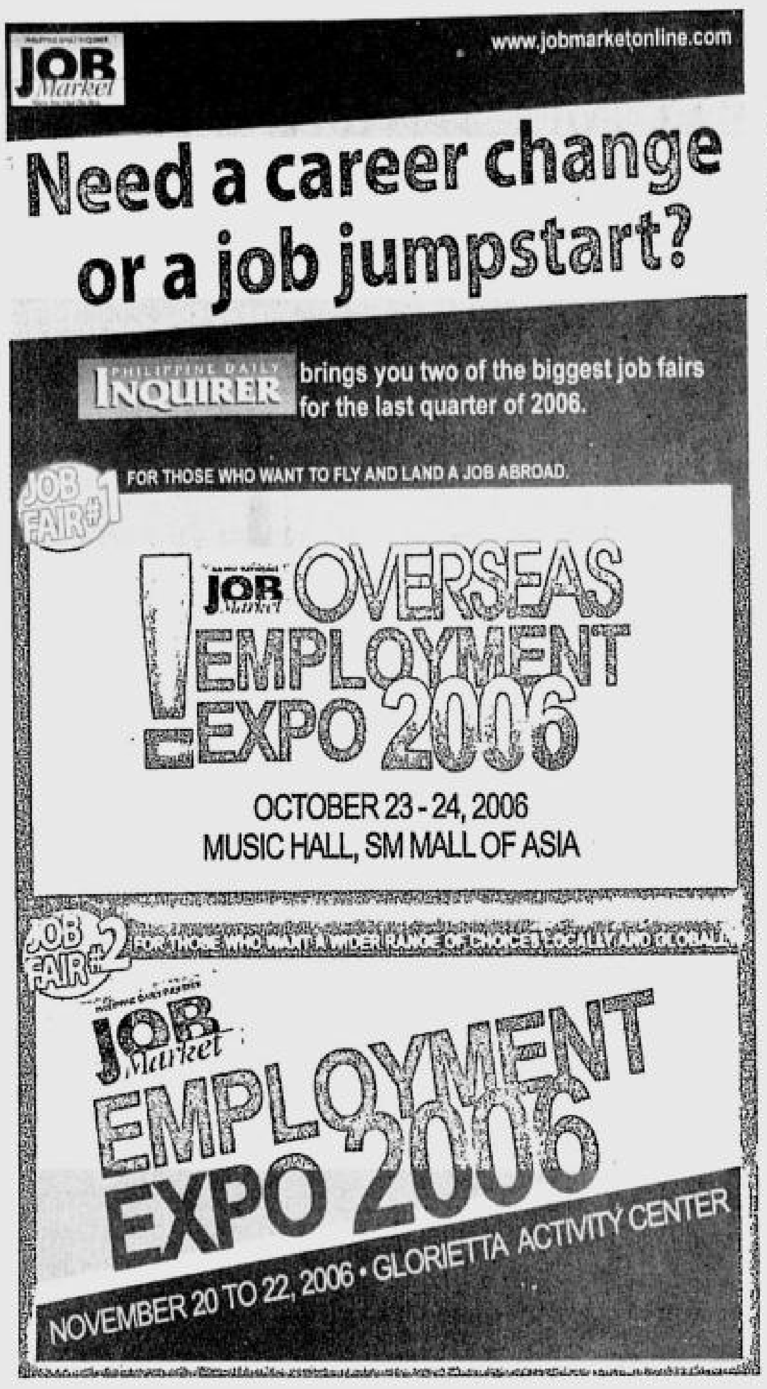
A Quezon City judge recently declared the board, which was elected in June, as the de facto board authorized to handle the chapter funds. But the PNRC has maintained that the elections were null and void.

At a press conference at the PNRC-QC yesterday, Liban said Torres' charges were malicious, baseless and fabricated.

Torres had accused him of illegally withdrawing P11 million from the PNRC's bank account and forcibly opening her office to take some P300,000 in cash donations.

Liban said he only transferred the funds of the chapter from its original bank account under the name of PNRC to a new account for the PNRC-QC chapter itself.

Torres declined to comment on Liban's statements, as well as the complaints she filed, saying she was acting in behalf of the PNRC.



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SC justices should take a look at Jeff

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

RONALD "JEFF" QUESADA, A quadriplegic (paralyzed on both arms and both feet) sentenced to life imprisonment for rape, has been assured of relative comfort in the maximum security compound of the National Bilibid Prison.

He has been adopted by Sigue-Sigue Sputnik, one of the biggest gangs in the maximum security compound. Some gang members have been assigned to take turns looking after his basic needs like eating and answering the call of nature. Jeff has to be spoon-fed when he eats. He also has to be helped by two or three men in going to the toilet.

Sigue-Sigue Sputnik adopted Jeff as one of their own because he's Tagalog. All the other members are from Tagalog-speaking regions.

The other major gangs in maximum security are Sigue-Sigue Commando, OXO, Batang City Jail and Samahang Bicol. These gangs represent the other ethnic or regional groupings in the country.

Jeff's conviction is on appeal. But it may take some time for the higher courts to affirm or reverse the verdict of the Bulacan Regional Trial Court.

Jeff's case is unique in that he is probably the only quadriplegic in the world who has been sent to prison for rape.

The judge or judges who handled the rape case didn't believe the testimony of Jeff's physical therapist who said that it was impossible for him to commit rape. Jeff's co-accused, a female cousin, is also serving time at the Women's Correctional in Mandaluyong.

I'm taking the cudgels for Jeff even though he has already been convicted because I'm 100 percent sure of his innocence.

When his case was first brought to my attention at my defunct TV program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," I was dumbfounded. How could a guy who could hardly move be charged with rape and how come the judges who heard his case did not dismiss the charge outright, I asked myself.

People who saw the "Isumbong" episodes where we featured Jeff couldn't help but comment on the stupidity of the charge.

I know that the honorable members of the Supreme Court are very wise men and women (I'm not soft-soaping them) but they should speed up Jeff's appeal.

I know it's not proper for them, but if they could only go see Jeff's condition or have somebody take a look at him, I'm sure the high court magistrates would immediately arrive at a judicious conclusion.

* * *

Another libel case has been filed against me and my brother Raffy by another person, this time by Iloilo Customs Collector Lourdes Mangaoang.

The libel case stemmed from my series of articles about her when she was customs collector of Zamboanga in 2001.

Why did it take her five years to file the libel suit? Who coaxed her?

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Sealed bids will be received by the Pre-bids and Awards Committee (PBAC), at LEYECO V Main Office in Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City, Leyte on November 7, 2006 at 1:30 in the afternoon, at which time and place said proposals will be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.

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(PDI - Sept 28 30 & Oct 2 2006)

V. Oliva; 80

VIRGINIA NICOLAS OLIVA, OF Sta. Maria, Bulacan, passed away on Sept. 24. Her body lies in the family residence at 929 San Vicente in Sta. Maria, Bulacan. Interment will be on Sept. 28, Thursday, at St. Pascual Memorial Park after a Mass to be held at 2 p.m. at the Sto. Niño Parish Church in Parada, Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

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INQUIRER

Israelis to leave Lebanon by Sept. 30–UN

BEIRUT—A UN COMMANDER said on Tuesday Israeli troops should be out of south Lebanon within days, but Israeli media said a full withdrawal could be delayed after a meeting with the UN peacekeepers did not reach full agreement.

Israeli forces have gradually been pulling out of territory they captured during a 34-day war with Hezbollah guerrillas that ended with a truce on Aug. 14. Israeli and Lebanese officers met with the commander of the UN peacekeeping force at the border on Tuesday to discuss the continued withdrawal.

"It is my belief that with the necessary cooperation by both parties we should see the (Israeli army) leave south Lebanon by the end of this month," UN force commander Major General Alain Pellegrini said in a statement after the meeting.

But Israel's Channel One television said that disagreements at the meeting over the disarming of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon meant a withdrawal could be delayed beyond the weekend.

Asked about the report, Alexander Ivanko, spokesperson for the UN force, said the peacekeepers had not been informed of any delay in the Israeli withdrawal.

"We have not been informed about any delays or timetables but it has been made clear by the (UN) force commander that he expects the process to be finalized by the end of the month," Ivanko said.

Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz said earlier on Tuesday that Israel hoped to complete its withdrawal soon but that this would depend on agreement being reached with the UN force on rules of engagement.

"I hope very much that during the coming week, at the most a few more days, we will complete the withdrawal," Peretz said.

"There are arrangements, negotiations (and) deliberations which we intend to complete in order to set the rules—what is permitted and what is forbidden," he told reporters.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mark Regev said that Israel would withdraw once it was convinced that the terms of UN resolution 1701 that ended the war would be observed.

"We have no desire or intention to prolong our stay in Lebanon, and the minute it is understood that the other relevant parts of 1701 will also be fulfilled, then of course Israel will be ready to pull out," he said.

"Resolution 1701 specifically calls for a total arms embargo to prevent arms reaching Hezbollah (and) the total elimination of an armed Hezbollah presence south of the Litani River, and we're hopeful that the Lebanese government and the international forces will be acting to provide those conditions to make the Israeli withdrawal expeditious." Israel has so far handed over around 90 percent of that territory to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is beefing up its numbers to monitor the truce.

Israeli officials said earlier in the month they hoped to pull out all troops by last weekend, but this was delayed while discussions with UNIFIL continued.

"There are going to be all these international forces who speak different languages," said Miri Eisin, a spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. "They will all be under UNIFIL but there is a question of their coordination with the Lebanese army and their coordination with Israeli army.

"These rules of engagement entail who does what—do you call the Lebanese army, the Israeli army—what is going to be done." *Reuters*

US wants to verify Iran nuke suspension

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States Tuesday noted "hopeful" signs from Iran, on the eve of Tehran's latest nuclear talks with Europe, but warned sanctions were still on tap if diplomacy fails.

Intrigue over the talks, due to be held Wednesday in an undisclosed location, was further deepened by a newspaper report here that Tehran was close to announcing a halt to uranium enrichment.

The suspension would last 90 days to allow time for more talks with European nations, The Washington Times reported.

Asked whether the report was true, State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack told reporters: "An accurate answer to that question would involve having very clear and accurate insight into the decision-making process of the Iranian regime, which we don't have." McCormack said there were promising signals from Tehran.

"I have heard some hopeful statements from the Iranian foreign minister, for example. We'll see if those are borne out," he said.

"We certainly hope that the answer is, 'Yes, we will suspend; we will verifiably suspend, in order to get to negotiations.' ... That's certainly our preferred course of action here," he said.

But Iran must comply with a suspension of uranium enrichment as outlined by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the UN Security Council. *AFP*

THIS recent undated photograph shows National Research Council of Canada (NRC) scientist Marc Rioux examining the virtual 3-D model of the Leonardo Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" using a multi-resolution display system also developed at NRC. AFP

3D imaging reveals 'Mona Lisa' incarnations

OTTAWA—LEONARDO DA VINCI's "Mona Lisa" originally wore a delicate maternity garment, her hair gathered up in a bun, details that have disappeared under varnish but are now visible under 3D imaging, scientists said Tuesday.

Researchers of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) announced their findings of the first 3D images of the masterpiece, using a complex laser scanner, at a news conference in Ottawa.

"This is the 'Mona Lisa' as we have never seen her before," said NRC president Pierre Coulombe.

A team of NRC researchers had traveled to Paris in October 2004 to conduct the research on probably the Louvre Museum's most viewed painting, at the request of the French state museum agency Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musees de France (CRRMF).

The 3D scans revealed that the woman with the enigmatic smile was originally painted with her hair tied back in a bun, even though today it appears loose on her shoulders.

The revelation settles an old controversy because only girls or women of bad virtue wore their hair loose in 16th century Italy, said CRRMF project leader Bruno Mottin, and the real Mona Lisa was a woman of social stature.

One of her garments, similar to fashions that pregnant or nursing women wore in this period, was also lost under yellow varnish and no longer visible to the naked eye, infrared scans showed.

"This is something that had never been seen until now," Mottin said.

The real Mona Lisa had three children. Da Vinci was commissioned by wealthy Florentine businessman Francesco del Giocondo to paint his wife between 1503 and 1506 after the birth of their second child, but he kept it and worked on it until his death, likely changing her hair and other features.

In the original "Mona Lisa," the subject gripped her chair more tightly, and she is not resting against the back of her chair, as some believed, but sitting upright, scans showed. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

World's 1st zero-gravity surgery

MERIGNAC, FRANCE—A team of French doctors planned to slice a cyst off patient Philippe Sanchot's arm Wednesday in the world's first zero-gravity surgery, operating aboard an airplane soaring and diving in and out of weightlessness. The experiment is part of a broader effort to develop robots for future surgeries from a distance, in space or on Earth, the doctors said. The surgeons will be strapped to the walls of the Airbus 300 Zero-G for the three-hour operation. The plane was scheduled to take off Wednesday mid-morning from the Institute for Aeronautic Maintenance in Merignac, adjacent to Bordeaux in southwest France. It was to make 30 roller coaster-like maneuvers, called parabolas, during the flight. *AP*

'Tokyo Rose' dies at 90

CHICAGO—Iva Toguri D'Aquino, who was convicted and later pardoned of being World War II propagandist "Tokyo Rose," died Tuesday of natural causes, said her nephew, William Toguri. She was 90. Tokyo Rose was the name given by soldiers to a female radio broadcaster responsible for anti-American transmissions intended to demoralize soldiers fighting in the Pacific theater. D'Aquino was the only US citizen identified among the potential suspects. In 1949, she became the seventh person to be convicted of treason in American history and served six years in prison. D'Aquino was born in Los Angeles on July 4, 1916, to Japanese immigrant parents. *AP*

Enron exec gets 6 years

HOUSTON—The architect of one of the biggest corporate frauds in US history was sentenced Tuesday to six years in prison, four years less than the maximum allowed under a plea deal the former Enron chief financial officer made with prosecutors. Andrew Fastow will also serve two years under supervision, US District Judge Kenneth Hoyt ruled. Fastow choked back tears as he told the judge he despaired over the pain and suffering he had caused. He said he accepted his punishment "without bitterness." Fastow also turned to the lone shareholder who came to testify against him and offered an apology. "I cannot undo the harm I have caused," Fastow told the court, adding that he was ashamed of what he had done. *AFP*

Saddam genocide trial postpone

BAGHDAD—After throwing Saddam Hussein out of court again, the judge hearing the deposed dictator's genocide trial abruptly postponed the case until Oct. 9 so Saddam and his co-defendants could consult with lawyers who are boycotting the trial or find new ones. The court session Tuesday degenerated into a shouting match with Judge Muhammad al-Uraibi barking at Saddam and his co-defendants to "sit down" and "shut up." The men, charged with killing tens of thousands of Kurds in 1988, shouted back that the judge was not respecting them and had already decided their guilt. *New York Times News Service*

Bulgaria, Romania to join EU

STRASBOURG—The European Commission on Tuesday gave Bulgaria and Romania the go-ahead to join the European Union in January, but with the closest monitoring system ever imposed on new members. The 26th and 27th members of the European club will be allowed to join up on Jan. 1, 2007, Commission President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso announced at an plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. "I would like to congratulate the peoples and the authorities of Bulgaria and Romania for all the efforts they have produced in order to fulfill the conditions for accession to the European Union," said Barroso. *AFP*

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Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		Non-Refundable Fee
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1 Lot Backfiling of Documents of Various Head Office Units for the Document Imaging System Project	P3,300,000.00	September 29, 2006 2:00 PM	October 11, 2006 1:00 PM	P 1,700.00
3,220 Rolls Thermal Tape Stock # 856681, For NCR 7720 Encoding Machine	P2,047,920.00	October 5, 2006 9:00 AM	October 25, 2006 1:00 PM	P 1,100.00
145,000 pcs. LANDBANK T-Shirt	P10,875,000.00	October 5, 2006 1:30 PM	October 25, 2006 1:00 PM	P 5,500.00
5,640 Pcs. Ribbon "Original" Re-order No. 07K4446 Length: 23m x 6.35mm (for IBM 9068-A01 Passbook Printer)	P4,292,491.00	October 5, 2006 10:00 AM	October 25, 2006 1:00 PM	P 2,400.00
640 Pcs. Ribbon "Original" for MICR Fuji Encoder Model 1026/27	480,307.00			

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting September 21, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at GSD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes placed in single outer envelope and sealed accordingly in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the LANDBANK-Requisitions Management Division at telephone nos. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - Sept. 21 & 28, 2006)

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga
Tel. No. (045) 900-2650, (045) 9000-689 Fax No. (045) 9010-534
Email address: pelco-2@yahoo com

September 25, 2006

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Item	Quantity
1. Pentium Processor 4 3.0Ghz Mother Board (Intel Desktop Board) Memory: 1GB 3com Lan Card 10/100 VGA Card: 128MB Hard Disk: Seagate/Maxtor 80GB 7200 RPM Casing: Tower Case with Exhaust Fan With Keyboard & Mouse Glass Filter 17" and Mouse Pad	62 units
2. APC 650 (UPS)	62 units
3. Epson LQ 300+	19 units
4. Monitor 17" Color	44 units
5. CD-W Drive	35 units
6. Windows 2000 SP4 or Win XP Pro Sp2	62 units
7. Printer LQ 2180	2 units
8. Flat Screen LCD 14" Color	20 units
9. Switch Hub 3com (3C17300)	4 units

You are therefore invited for the pre-qualification to bid on October 4, 2006 (Wednesday), 10:00 a.m. at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein there will be an orientation and discussion with regards to the specification of the units and in preparation for the bidding proper scheduled on October 11, 2006 (Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m.

Request further to include two separate sealed bids/proposals for the following:

1. Technical Proposals
2. Financial Proposals

To all interested bidders please prepare and submit the following documents to the BAC Chairman for your Accreditation. (For non-accredited supplier only)

1. Company's Profile
2. Latest ITR
3. Mayor's/Business Permit
4. Audited Financial Statement
5. DTI and SEC Registration
6 Accreditation Fee (P1,000.00)

All qualified bidders should secure bidding documents to the BAC Secretary with Bid Documents Fee to be determined with the confirmed number of bidders divided by the actual expenses incurred in the publication of this invitation and the reproduction of the bidding documents to be paid at the cashier's office.

The Bid Bond to be included in the Financial Proposal is either in the form of the following:

a. Cash/Manager's Check · 2.5% of the total bid price
b. Surety Bond · 10% of the total bid price

All bidders are requested to be at PELCO II Board Room exactly at the given date and time. Non-attendance on the scheduled pre-qualification and late bidders on the scheduled time of the bidding would mean an outright disqualification and can no longer participate on the bidding.

The Approved Budget Cost for this particular bidding is THREE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY TWO THOUSAND PESOS (Php 3,762,000.00).

THE BAC has the right to reject any or all bids that do not comply with the requirements, waive any informality in the proposal received and to accept such most advantageous to the cooperative.

For more information please see/contact Engr. Raul L. Canlas at PELCO II Office or dial number (045) 900-26.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RAUL L. CANLAS
PBAC Chairperson

Noted by:
(Sgd.) Mr. Sulpicio C. Lagarde,Jr.
General Manager

(PDI - Sept. 28 & 29, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632)920-6401*(632)920-6446
E-mail: sssemail@info.com.ph
Web site http://www.sss.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
IAEB No.2006-031-Goods

SSS SELF-SERVICE INFORMATION TERMINALS
Supply, delivery and set-up into operational state fifty (50) units Self-Service Information Terminals and one (1) unit Management Server

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) intends to apply the sum of **P10,355,902.64** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the above proposed equipment, consisting of the following:

	Item Description	Amount	Source of Fund
Item#1	Hardware & Software	P 8,114,278.64	CY2006 Approved Budget for Information Terminals
Item#2	3-year Maintenance Service	P 2,241,624.00	Budget for Operating Expenditures
	TOTAL	P10,355,902.64	M/R Computer Equipment

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The SSS now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the supply, delivery and set-up into operational state the required hardware and software. Supply, delivery and installation of the GOODS are required within **sixty (60) calendar days** after contract signing/receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a **non-refundable fee of P10,000.00**. The method of payment will be on a cash basis payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg., Ground floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The SSS will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **October 13, 2006 at 3:30p.m.**, Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on **October 27, 2006 not later than 3:30p.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be held on **October 27, 2006 at 3:30p.m.**, Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.
9. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bid and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel # 922-2991; 924-7380; 920-6401 local 5491
Email – bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number – (02) 924-7380

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI – September 28, 2006)

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Thailand junta narrows choice for new premier

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S junta narrowed its search for a new prime minister Wednesday, as a popular retired general emerged as a major contender alongside a former head of the World Trade Organization.

The junta leader, Gen. Sonthi Boonyaratglin, has promised to name a civilian premier within days but said Tuesday that the junta would remain as a National Security Council to keep a tight check on the new government.

The leading candidate for the premiership had been seen as former WTO boss Supachai Panitchpakdi, whose leadership could ease concerns among investors about Thailand's economic future.

But Sonthi indicated that retired military officers would be considered candidates, sparking speculation in Thai media that the job could go to the respected former army boss Gen. Surayud Chulanont.

A spokesperson said Wednesday that Thailand's junta will name a new prime minister this weekend, but the generals have not yet decided who they want to take the job.

SURAYUD AFP

SUPACHAI REUTERS

Boonyaratglin "is scheduled to have a royal audience on Saturday to submit the interim constitution for royal approval, and the name of the new prime minister will be announced one day after," Maj. Gen. Thawip Netniyom told AFP.

But he said the junta had not yet chosen the person to replace ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

"As of today, it's unclear who will become the next prime minister," he said.

Surayud, 63, is a career soldier who briefly became a Buddhist monk after retiring. He now sits on the Privy Council, the innermost circle of advisers to Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The Bangkok Post newspaper said Wednesday that Surayud has already been encouraged to accept the job, but that no decision had been made.

He remains a popular figure among the military, where he is credited with professionalizing the armed forces and respected for his deep loyalty to the king.

The king has given his endorsement to the generals, a move which is widely credited with helping to prevent violence after the country's first coup in 15 years. Any prime minister they choose would be confirmed by the king, army officials say.

But if the military decides to name one of their own as prime minister, it could raise new questions about how tightly checked the junta plans to keep the new government.

Sonthi told AFP in an interview Tuesday that the governing military council would work alongside the new government "so that there is no loophole for the executive branch."

After ousting Shinawatra in a late-night coup on Sept. 19, the junta said they had acted to eliminate rampant corruption under the billionaire politician's regime and to restore democratic institutions that he had undermined.

The generals also tossed out the constitution, clamped down on the media, banned gatherings and imposed martial law.

They have promised the military-appointed premier will only remain for one year, until a new constitution can be written and elections held in October 2007.

AFP

Bush orders Iraq intel report made public

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush blasted political opponents on Tuesday for selectively leaking from a secret intelligence assessment on global terrorism and then made public the report's main conclusion that the Iraq war had become a "cause celebre" for Islamic extremists.

Democrats had seized on leaked portions of the National Intelligence Estimate to criticize the administration's handling of the Iraq war and members of the US Congress had pressed the White House to declassify the entire document.

At a news conference with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Bush said it was "a bad habit for our government to declassify every time there's a leak." But he said he decided to make it public so "you can read it for yourself" and stop the speculation that he said was aimed at confusing the American public.

"Somebody has taken it upon themselves to leak classified information for political purposes," Bush said.

The office of intelligence director John Negroponte released a 3-1/2 page section of the April report "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States" compiled by the 16 US spy agencies hours after Bush ordered it declassified.

BUSH AFP

"The Iraq conflict has become the 'cause celebre' for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of US involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement," the report said.

"Should jihadists leaving Iraq perceive themselves, and be perceived, to have failed, we judge fewer fighters will be inspired to carry on the fight." Democrats, hoping to take control of Congress in November elections, pounced on media leaks about the report as evidence that Bush's Iraq policy had worsened the global terrorism threat.

Bush is intent on portraying his Republican party as stronger on national security than Democrats and better able to protect Americans.

The report said al-Qaida would continue to pose "the greatest threat" to the United States by a single group.

Reuters

Japan PM to mend ties with neighbors

TOKYO—JAPAN'S new nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to repair battered relations with Asian neighbors while also pursuing a more assertive foreign policy and overhauling the country's pacifist constitution.

Abe, 52, the hand-picked successor to the outgoing prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, was overwhelmingly voted into office on Tuesday on promises to continue his predecessor's economic reforms, rein in spending and boost the country's international profile.

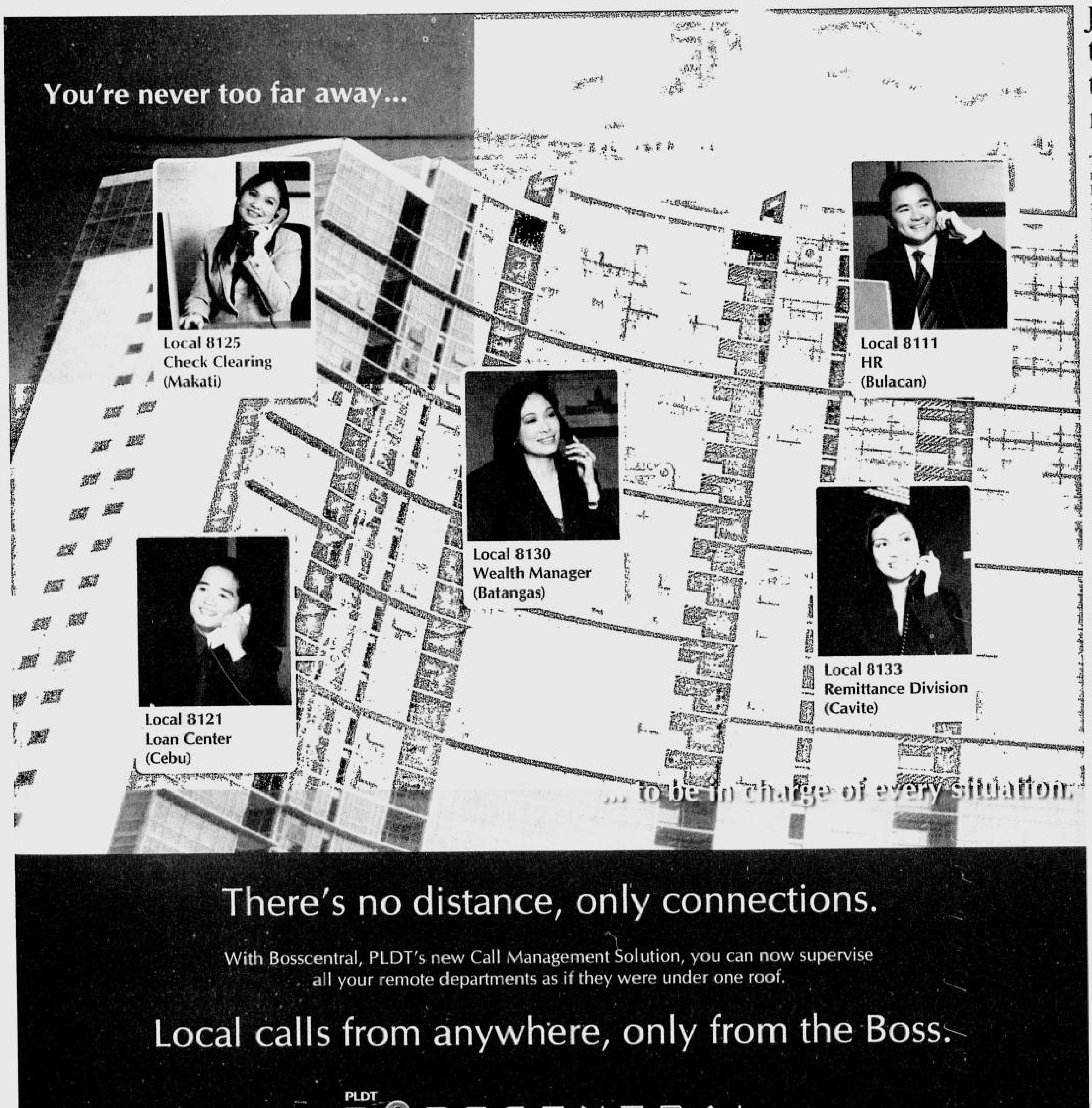
"This does not mean to blindly assert Japan's national interests, but to ask what role Japan should play in the region and the world, and what the international community should strive for," Abe declared in his first news conference as prime minister late Tuesday.

One of Abe's top challenges will be repairing Japan's deteriorating ties with China and South Korea. Beijing and Seoul on Tuesday reacted cautiously to Abe's election, calling for the new Japanese government to take steps to improve relations.

"China is a very important country for Japan, and China's development is a plus also for Japan," Abe said. "I will work to further develop relations between Japan and China."

Off to a fast start in setting up his Cabinet, Abe stocked the new government with conservatives on every issue from the economy and foreign affairs to defense and women's rights.

AP



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WHAT'S INSIDE

$300,000 bonus, rich rematches lured Pacquiao /A24

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Fil-Am gives up Asian Games swim berth/A26

Eagles seek title, weather permitting

WILL THE ATENEO BLUE EAGLES put away the UAAP championship crown tonight?

Not if the Santo Tomas Tigers—or even the weather—spoil the celebration.

The Eagles, who last won the title in 2002, will aim for a Finals sweep against the Tigers in Game 2 of the best-of-three series at 4 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

But in the event the inclement weather continues, the league will move Game 2 to another date. Classes have been suspended with typhoon Milenyo expected to hit Metro Manila today.

The league will make an announcement by 8 a.m. today according to UAAP secretary general Bren Perez last night.

Despite the brewing storm, the Eagles looked forward to ending the championship series by coming up with some adjustments.

"Our post defense still needs work," said Ateneo coach Norman Black even before commending the Eagles' brilliant 73-72 escape in Game 1 last Sunday.

CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
12 noon—UST vs FEU (Women-Game 3)
2 p.m.—Ateneo vs FEU (Jrs-Game 3)
3:30 p.m.—Awarding Ceremonies
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs UST (Srs-Game 2)

Doug Kramer turned out to be Ateneo's game hero, receiving a long inbound pass from Macky Eacalona and burying an undergoal stab all in one second.

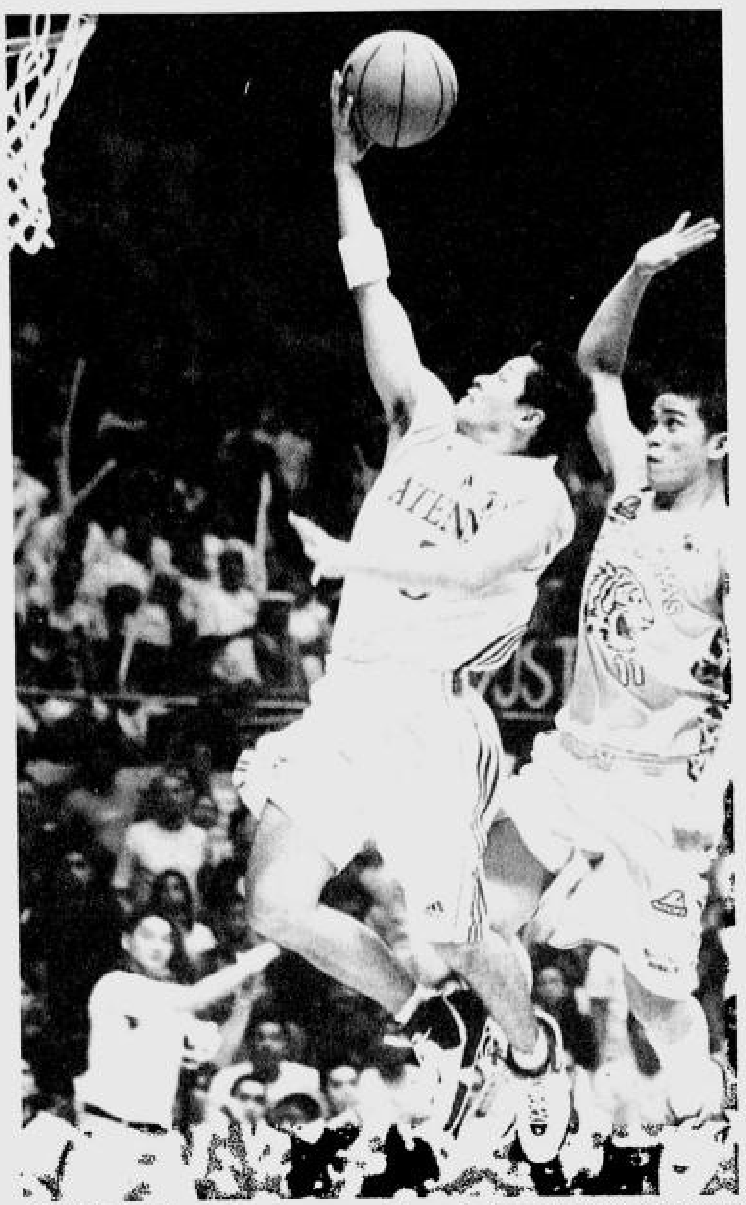
But before the Eagles' responded in the clutch, the Tigers nearly pulled off a stunner when Allan Evangelista nailed a jumper that gave UST its final lead.

"The game was everything we expected and more," said Black after the game. "We knew it will be a tough contest."

Despite the crushing loss, coach Pido Jarencio said the Tigers are determined to extend the series to a do-or-die match.

"I'm still confident," said Jarencio. "We have

EAGLES/ A24



ATENEO'S Macky Escalona completes a fastbreak off Jojo Duncil of UST in Sunday's Game 1. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Cage row over as MVP elects to head SBP

PANGILINAN

SAYING TIME HAS come to finally unify Philippine basketball, telecommunications magnate Manny V. Pangilinan yesterday announced his decision to serve as chair and president of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas.

"Now that the elements are in place, it is now time to make that unity happen," Pangilinan said in a statement. "The Fiba deadline adds critical urgency to completing this national task.

"I am prepared to assume the position of chairman and president of the SBP in a concurrent capacity provided I have the full support of both Pilipinas Basketball and the Basketball Association of the Philippines in forming the management team."

Pangilinan's acceptance to lead the SBP, a group created following the unification of Pilipinas Basketball (PB) and the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP), is the penultimate step before the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) lifts the indefinite suspension on the country.

"After three weeks of work, the three-man panel has reached the closing stage of finally forging unity for Philippine basketball," said the chair and CEO of telecommunications giant PLDT. "For this, I'm indeed grateful for the cooperation and contribution

CAGE/ A24

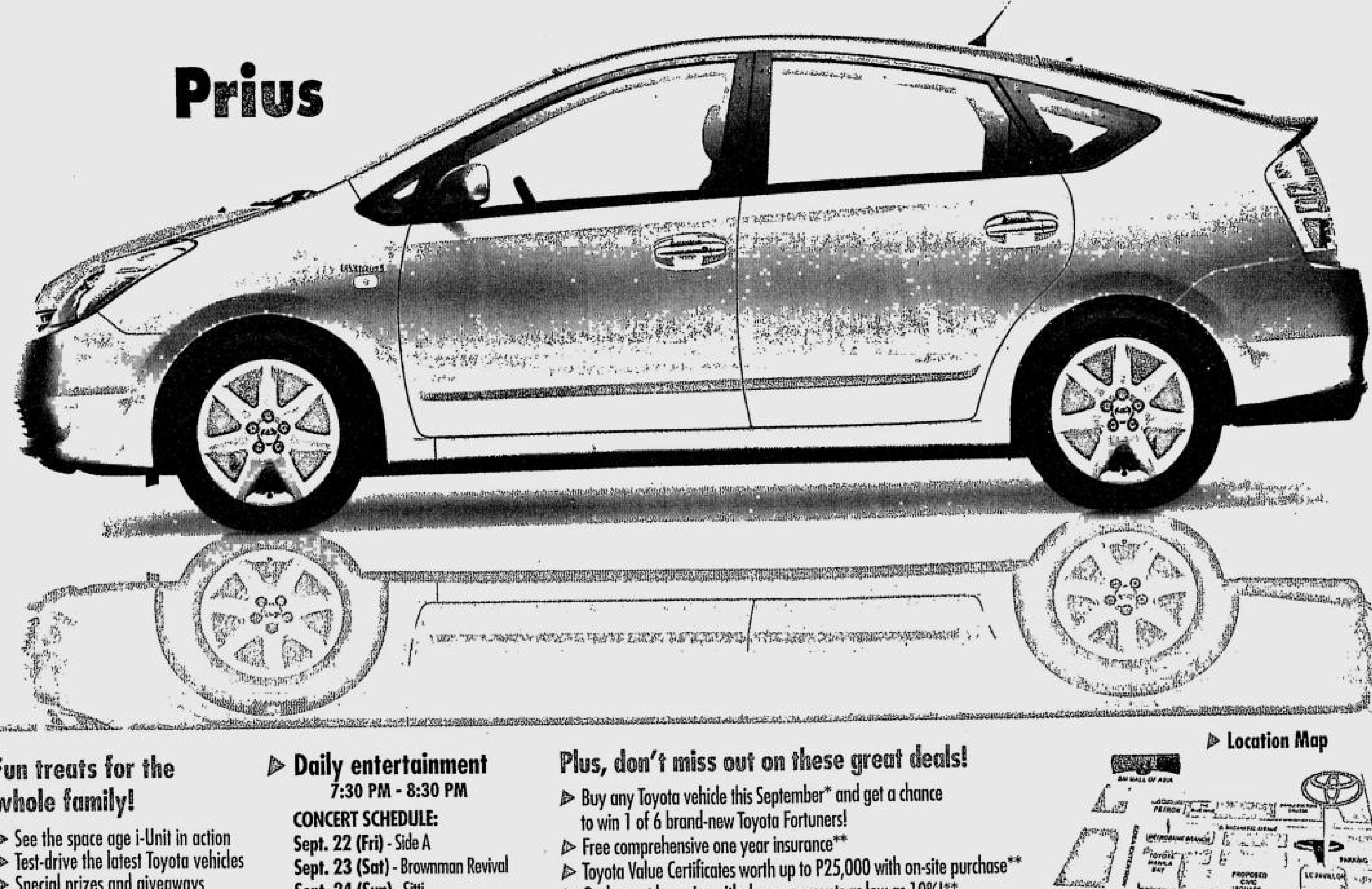
TOYOTA moving forward

Leading the way in innovation

THE 2ND WORLD OF TOYOTA MOTORSHOW
September 22-28, Le Pavillon Metropolitan Park
Operating Hours: 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM

▷ Once again, the power of a great idea moves us forward with the revolutionary Toyota Prius - the world's most-advanced hybrid vehicle designed to balance seamless acceleration and fuel efficiency with ecological responsibility. See it up close.
▷ Also, witness the unveiling of 4 new and exciting Toyota vehicles!

Prius



Fun treats for the whole family!
- ▷ See the space age i-Unit in action
- ▷ Test-drive the latest Toyota vehicles
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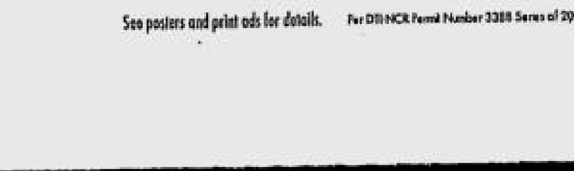
- ▷ Exciting kiddie shows
- ▷ Genuine Toyota parts and accessories display and installation
- ▷ Free car-wash and 10-point check-up

▷ Daily entertainment
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM
CONCERT SCHEDULE:
Sept. 22 (Fri) - Side A
Sept. 23 (Sat) - Brownman Revival
Sept. 24 (Sun) - Sitti
Sept. 25 (Mon) - Bloomfields
Sept. 26 (Tue) - Sugarfree
Sept. 27 (Wed) - Updharmadown
Sept. 28 (Thu) - Bamboo

Plus, don't miss out on these great deals!
- ▷ Buy any Toyota vehicle this September* and get a chance to win 1 of 6 brand-new Toyota Fortuners!
- ▷ Free comprehensive one year insurance**
- ▷ Toyota Value Certificates worth up to P25,000 with on-site purchase**
- ▷ Grab great bargains with down payments as low as 10%!**
- ▷ Enjoy monthly payments as low as P6,080!**
- ▷ Up your ride with Toyota Trade-in Certificates worth P20,000

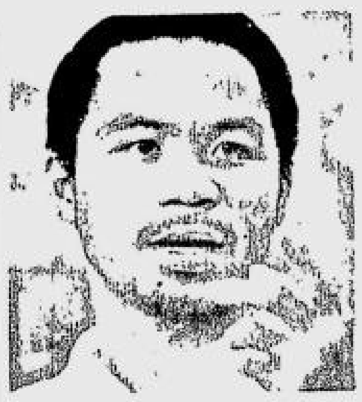
*Up to September 28 only.
**On selected vehicles only.

▷ Location Map



See posters and print ads for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit Number 3388 Series of 2006.

$300,000 bonus, rich rematches lured Pacquiao



PACQUIAO: Unexpected bonus

A $300,000 (P15.4 MILLION) SIGNING bonus plus multimillion dollar purses from grudge matches with Mexican fight icons Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez.

These are just two of the most tempting packages Oscar De La Hoya offered Filipino boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao in successfully winning him over to fight under his Golden Boy Promotions.

De La Hoya revealed the deal to ESPN, in a report carried by the website sportinglife.com yesterday.

The signing bonus was totally unexpected, according to a source close to the camp of Pacquiao, whose reported action drew furious protests and a threat of legal action from his erstwhile US promoter Bob Arum, chief of Top Rank Promotions.

Arum told ESPN's Dan Rafael on Monday that Pacquiao violated a stipulation in their separate agreement. He said the Top Rank deal bars the Filipino icon from signing a promotional deal before his Nov. 18 final showdown with Mexico's Erik Morales.

"Yes, we have signed him," De La Hoya said.

Pacquiao has neither confirmed nor denied the deal, however.

Arum said his lawyers were waiting for details of the reported De La Hoya-Pacquiao contract before taking legal action.

"Golden Boy has torturously interfered with our contract," Arum said Monday.

The expected Arum legal counter-attack has not ruffled Pacquiao, according to his Filipino trainer at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles, California.

Pacquiao now weighs 135 lb, or just five pounds over the super featherweight limit of 130, the contract weight for his 12-round showdown with Morales.

In an interview with Philboxing.com, trainer Buboy Fernandez revealed that Pacquiao is so hyped-up with the fight, his trainers are worried he might peak well before the fight.

"We're still doing road works and studying Morales' moves," Fernandez said. "We will also look at ways to counter him, and how he [Pacquiao] can run."

Fernandez was referring to the recent Marco Antonio Barrera-Rocky Juarez bout where Barrera avoided being hit most of the fight and earned a decision win.

Morales, meanwhile, still hovers in the 140s although many believe he would end up still making the weight. The Mexican recently underwent extensive scientific training in Los Angeles. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Red Bull, Alaska clash in Guam as PBA gets going

By Musong R. Castillo

THE LAST TIME ALASKA SET FOOT ON THE tiny island of Guam, it was working on a dynasty built around a young, cunning guard named Johnny Abarrientos.

That was 12 years ago, when four Philippine Basketball Association teams played a goodwill tournament there, with Alaska, then known as the Milkmen, winning it to count among the 10 or so titles they won in dominating the 1990s.

Now known as the Aces, and with the hero of that championship game against Formula Shell—Roel Gomez—long retired and the nucleus of the team completely different, Alaska hopes to kick off its Philippine Cup campaign with the same charm it did in 1994.

Alaska slugs it out with Red Bull in an official game today at the University of Guam Fieldhouse at around 5:30 p.m. (Manila time) to formally take the lid off the pro league's 32nd season.

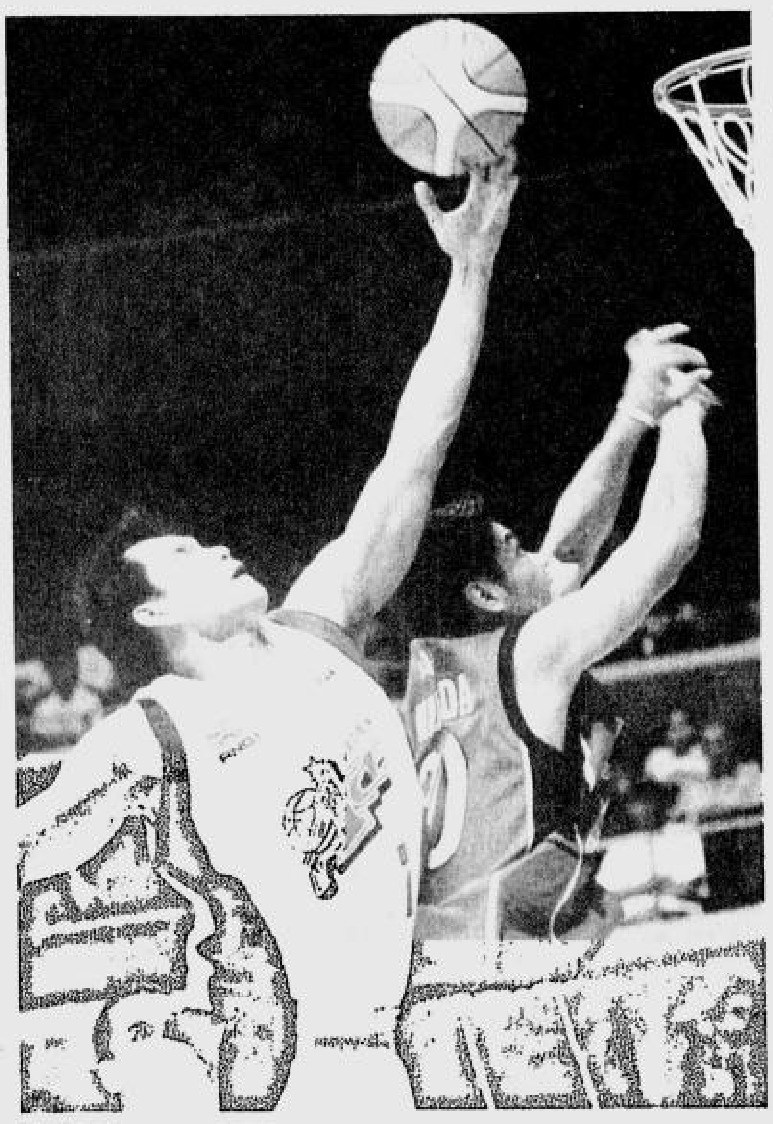
Only Poch Juinio, who was inked to a short term contract, will be returning to play—if at all—as the other members, Jojo Lastimosa and Rene Hawkins, among others, are now in the coaching staff and Abarrientos likely to sing his swan song with a different team.

"Wow, that's been a long time," said Alaska coach Tim Cone, a few moments before departing on Monday.

Alaska and Red Bull are two of the "quietest" teams during the off-season, after several sides beefed up their lineups—or totally weakened them—with deals that kept the interest in the league in the sports pages.

The traditional parade of teams happens on Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum during the elaborate opening rites scheduled at 4 p.m. Fancied Barangay Ginebra slugs it out with newcomer Welcoat in the only game scheduled at 6 o'clock.

GAME TODAY (*UOG Fieldhouse*)
5:30 p.m.—Alaska vs. Red Bull
GAME SUNDAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4 p.m.—Opening Ceremonies
6 p.m.—Welcoat vs. Barangay Ginebra



FIRST OF THE SEASON: Red Bull and Alaska collide before an expected predominantly Filipino crowd in Guam today. ERIK ARAZAS

Fate of 3 Asiad team sports bleak, says PSC

By June Navarro

IT'S A QUESTION OF MONEY.

The inclusion of team sports in the Philippine delegation for the Asian Games hangs in the balance after the Philippine Sports Commission yesterday revealed that the budget for the Doha, Qatar, meet is short by at least P7 million.

Commissioner Richie Garcia, head of the PSC's national sports association affairs, said the agency can only allocate P30 million for the 399-strong RP contingent and that every thing over that amount should come from the private sector.

"The government has earmarked P30 million for the Asian Games and that's about it," said Garcia after emerging from the Philippine Olympic Committee general assembly meeting yesterday at the Milky Way restaurant in Makati City.

This could affect the bid of the three team disciplines—water polo, baseball and softball—for the quadrennial meet.

Garcia estimated that the PSC would spend at least P90,000 for each delegate in the two-week event. Making it more ominous is the fact that private sponsors have yet to come in.

"They (team sports officials) promised to solicit (funds) after they asked to be included," said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco. "We agreed, but it would depend on how much they could raise."

Of the 399 delegates, 269 are athletes, including 58 players from the three team sports, while the rest are coaches, officials and members of the secretariat from the Asian Games task force committee.

Though the list of athletes has yet to be finalized, the Asiad task force has already informed the Doha Asian Games Organizing Committee of the size of the RP contingent, which includes the three team sports.

Eagles seek . . .

From page A23

plans, there will be adjustments (for Game 2)."

Rookie center Jervy Cruz again spearheaded the Tigers' charge with a team-high 20 points and 13 rebounds in Game 1.

Black, meanwhile, continues to demand better performances from his big men.

"We're still having a hard time keeping them off the offensive boards," said Black. "We try to do a good job helping (defensively) Cruz and Evangelista, but somehow, every time we help, they're able to score. We just have to do a better job on our postdefense."

Before Kramers' endgame heroics, JC Intal kept the Eagles' afloat by pouring in 10 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter.

In junior play, the Ateneo Eaglets and the Far Eastern Baby Tamaraws will fight for the crown in their winner-take-all match at 2 p.m.

The UST Tigresses and the FEU Lady Tamaraws will also dispute the women's crown in Game 3 at 12 noon.

Before the seniors game, the league will honor the top performers this season. Intal and Adamson's Ken Bono are tightly contesting the Most Valuable Player award in the men's tournament.

Jasmine W. Payo

Cage row . . .

From page A23

of Joey Lina and Bernie Atienza and their respective memberships."

The Fiba, which ordered the BAP and the PB to unite under one banner, set the deadline for both parties to settle their differences on or before Sept. 30.

With this development, the 24-man SBP board can now elect a vice chair, with Pangilinan appointing the rest of the officers to complete the organizational hierarchy.

Pangilinan announced his decision during a meeting with top PLDT official Ricky Vargas and PB president Bernie Atienza at the PLDT office.

"We're fully supporting Mr. Pangilinan and we're giving him a free hand in appointing officials whom he feels are capable of working with him," said Atienza. "He's the only catalyst to the unification process."

Said Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco: "I'm glad that he accepted. He's the most ideal person to take the role of putting basketball together. He has no agenda and has shown sincerity in solving the crisis."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

ABC
SABADO 9
LINGGO 9
Philippine Idol
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Nickelodeon				Legend Of Shaolin Kung Fu	Mon Colle Night	Sentro Headlines	Letty La Mas Fea		Doble Cara		Philippine Idol	S O S		Shorts		Big News	Worst Case Scenario	
ABS-CBN 2		Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Yakitate Japan/ Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Calla Lily	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Super Inggo	Bituing Walang Ningning	Crazy For You		Pinoy Dream Academy	Bandila	SOCO	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		CSI: Miami (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Ultimate Guinness World Records	Samsung Sports World	Alias (Season IV)		Maximum Exposure (Season I)		Fear Factor (Season VI)		The Contender (Season II)		Supernatural (Season I)		Lost (Season II)	
Cartoon Network	My Little Pony	All New Popeye Show	I am Weasel	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Winx Club	Xiaolin Showdown	Max Steel	Robotboy	Mirumo De Pon	Pokemon: Johto Journey	Dual Justisers	Shaman King	Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons	Aqua Teen Hunger Force	Gundam Seed	Shaman King
Cinema One		Minsan Pa Mahalin Mo Ako				Bata, Bata Pa-ano Ka Ginawa				Babangon Ako't Dudurugin Kita				Snow White				Unlang	
Cinemax				Dog Park (4:10 PM)			Michael Collins (5:45PM)					Battlestar Galactica Mission II			The Specialist (9:25PM)			7 Swords (11:10PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Inside The Middle East/CNN Business Traveller/Global Office/Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Psychic Detectives	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Bones		Treasure Hunters		E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		Psychic Witness		Kings Of Construction		Raw Nature		Deadliest Catch		Engineering Series		Building The Ultimate	Connect	Mythbusters		Innovation On The Fast Track		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Ali Attack/Unbearable Bunny	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Monster Allergy	Lizzie Mcguire	Buzz on Maggie	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		2006 Enjoypool.com Battle of the BCA Champs SF 2		Pro Billiards '06 Enjoypool.com Women's Open 9-ball C'ships		UEFA Champions League 2006/07				UEFA Champions League 2006/07				Sportscenter Asia	Pool Snooker World Pool Masters '03 Holland		Pool Snooker World Pool Masters '03 Holland		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		American Dreams		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Nanny 911		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Church Through The Ages	Special Programming		EWTN Live Encore With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man: Spiritually for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Ang Pagbabago (3:45 PM)		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Jewel In The Palace	24 Oras		Captain Barbell (7:10 PM)		Majika		Bakekang (8:50 PM)	Love Story In Harvard	Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel				Judging Amy		Sue Thomas F.B. Eye		Mcleod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Family Law		Spooks		Wire In The Blood		Regenesis	
HBO	Losing Isaiah			War Of The Buttons			Side Out (5:45 PM)				Dennis The Menace			The Bourne Supremacy			Doomsday Gun (10:45PM)		
Hero TV	Angelic Layer	Sunny Pig	Last Exile	Mirmo de Pon	Sugar, A Little Snow Fairy	Naruto	Inuyasha	Saiyuki Reload	Full Metal Panic	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	Transformers Armada	Last Exile	Fortune Quest	BB Daman Bakugaiden V	Beyblade G-Revolution	AmDriver	Angelic Layer	Yu-Gi-Oh GX
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		EBC Earth Files		Japan Video Topics/ Arms		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Arms	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV		Smackdown				X-Men	The Batman	Experience		Mad TV		That 70s Show	Just For Laughs	Distraction	Banzai	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	The Late Show David Letterman	
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Food 911	Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Good Finds	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines		Handpicked The Dawn	Laguna Beach		MTV Hits	The Hills				Get Spotted	Ultrasound The Dawn	TRL		Punk'd	Laguna Beach	Flex in the City		VH1 All Access	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXilog
National Geographic	Monkey Business	Nat'l Geographic Specials		Megastructures		Naked Science Killer Asteroids		Top 5 - Animals Gone Wild		WOW! Bug Attack Invaders		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		MegaStructures Kansai Int'l Airport		Naked Science Shark Attacks	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Align			Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Equilibrium		Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	In Focus	Euromaxx	Ang Mga Nagsi-Alis Sa Dating Daan		Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		OpenLine Live	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	Ang Mga Nagsi-Alis Sa Dating Daan		Ang Pagbubunyag		World Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal News	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	SpongeBob Squarepants/ Fright On Top	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Danny Phantom	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Romeo	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Paolo Santos Acoustics				Ang Nanay Ni Brando				Kamusta Ka Hudas				Manchichirichi				Lagablab Sa Paraiso
Qtv	Always The Two Of Us	Shaman King	Battle B-Daman	BB Daman Bakugaiden	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Phoenix	Irene		Sorry I Love You		Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene
RPN 9	TV Shopping				Kapatid Show	RPN Aksyon News		Complete Savages	Jake In Progress	The 4400		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports				WNCAA		Badminton IBF World C'ships Finals				NFL Football Cincinnati @ Pittsburgh						Sportsdesk	Kings of the Road	Autofocus	
Sports Plus						World's Greatest Auto Show Miami		World Game		Auto Focus		WGC-AmEx Preview	World Golf C'ships - American Express C'ship Day 1						
Star Movies			Gattaca (3:45 PM)				The Fan				The Waterboy			Undiscovered			If Only (10:45PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Monk		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Hope & Faith	According To Jim	The Office	Two And A Half Men	The Drew Carey Show	Sons & Daughters	Seinfeld	Hope & Faith
Studio 23								Blog	Pinoy Dream Academy	Wazzup Wazzup	Two And A Half Men	Joey	Stacked	Grey's Anatomy		News Central	Closer (10:45PM)		MYXilog

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Athletics clinch AL West crown

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON—THE OAKLAND ATHletics pounded the Seattle Mariners,12-3, here Tuesday to seal the American League West division title.

Milton Bradley had a three-run homer and Jay Payton and Jason Kendall had four hits apiece as the A's snapped a three-game losing streak, including a devastating 10-9 loss in 10 innings to the Mariners on Monday in which closer Huston Street couldn't hold a three-run lead in the ninth.

With the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim losing 5-2 to the Texas Rangers just minutes earlier, the Athletics could celebrate when Chad Gaudin retired Ron Rivera on a fly ball to right field for the final out.

The Athletics have won 14 AL West crowns, the third-most division titles in the major leagues, behind the Atlanta Braves (16) and the New York Yankees, who wrapped up their 15th title last Wednesday.

After their trademark slow start, Oakland put on their patented late-season rush. The Athletics were 24-29 at the end of May, but went 67-37 since, the second-best record in baseball behind the playoff-bound Minnesota Twins.

Bradley's three-run homer off Jake Woods was the big blow in a four-run second inning that gave the A's a 5-0 advantage.

That would prove to be plenty for Rich Harden, who was making just his second start since June 4. *AFP*

NEW York Yankees' Gary Sheffield (right) is tagged out in a rundown between first and second bases by Baltimore Orioles' first baseman Kevin Millar. REUTERS

Nowitzki signs $60M contract

DALLAS—DIRK NOWITZKI IS STAYING with the Dallas Mavericks at least through the 2010-11 NBA season.

A week before opening training camp, the Mavs made sure their superstar forward remains under contract for the next five seasons with a lucrative extension Tuesday.

Nowitzki, 28, already was signed for the upcoming season and had a $16 million (euro12.6 million)-plus option for 2007-08 under the maximum contract he signed in 2001. The new deal guarantees that season, plus three more. He'll turn 33 the summer his new contract expires.

Terms of the deal were not released, but with basic raises the extension is likely worth around $60 million (euro47.3 million).

Nowitzki finished third in most valuable player award voting each of the last two years. His value soared this past post season, when he led Dallas to the league finals for the first time in franchise history. The Mavs took a 2-0 lead over the Miami Heat, then lost in six games.

BYRON Nelson

Golf legend Nelson dies

DALLAS, TEXAS—HALL OF FAME golfer Byron Nelson, who won 18 tournaments in 1945 in the greatest single season in the game's history, died on Tuesday at the age of 94.

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office confirmed the death.

Nelson, who is survived by his wife of nearly 20 years, Peggy, died at his Texas ranch, an unnamed family friend told the Dallas Morning News.

Nelson's 18 victories in 1945 included 11 in a row, a standard that many consider as close to unbreakable as a sports record can be.

The next-longest streak is six, achieved by both Ben Hogan and Tiger Woods.

"That goes down as one of the greatest streaks in all of sports," Woods has said. "I see Joe DiMaggio's record (hitting in 56 straight major league baseball games) being broken more so than someone winning 11 golf tournaments."

Nelson's 1945 season also included 19 straight rounds in the 60s. In 1944-45, he won 31 of his 54 starts." *AFP*

Cañare, Gatchalian pace WC q'finalists

ASIAN BOWLING FEDERATION (Hong Kong leg) champion Jojo Cañare and veteran Joonee Gatchalian rolled big games at Paeng's Midtown Lanes Tuesday to lead 14 others into the quarterfinals of the 2006 World Cup national finals for men and ladies.

Canare fired 242, 233 and 226 in her second 10-game series to finish with 3872 pins and a 193.69 average and overtake Liza del Rosario, who dropped to third at 3744 (187.20 average).

Gatchalian shot 279, 267, 263, 245, 228, 224 and 221 to score 5247 and average 218.63 after 24 games.

Gatchalian paced Raoul Miranda (5199), Chester King (5187), Paeng Nepomuceno (5102), RJ Bautista (5075), CJ Suarez (4940), Edgar Barroga (4908) and Markwin Tee (4890).

SPORTSWATCH

Bukidnon, Maguindanao win

BUKIDNON FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION AND THE Maguindanao-Cotabato City Football Association qualified for the PFF (Philippine Football Federation) under-19 Mindanao playoffs by topping their respective regional group eliminations recently. Headed by Del Monte's Ramon Manlunas, BUFA bested teams from Surigao and Cagayan de Oro while Cabili Sinsuat's MAGCOCIFA IX won over teams from Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and North Cotabato to finish their respective campaigns unbeaten.

RP darters hit target

THE PHILIPPINE DARTS TEAM TOPPED THE REcent III Asia Pacific Cup 2006 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Composed of Lourence Ilagan, Bobby Concepcion, Aravee Briones, Jojo Ballerino, Rose Noble and Annaliza Awitan, Team Pilipinas beat defending champion New Zealand in the semifinals and trounced Malaysia in the finals of the event which lured 59 countries.

Stag Festival today

ANOTHER BIG CROWD IS EXPECTED AT THE 15,000 -seat Roligon Mega Cockpit today as the second round of the Stag Festival 5- stag derby fires off at 5 p.m. with 75 fights programmed. Thirteen cockers tallied two wins each on Tuesday's opening round: Darwin Torres, Bubot Booc, Michael Faltado, Erwin Maligaya, Arnel Escarra, Reggie Nunag, Tony Jaen, Nick Ocampo, Edgar Non, RJ Spendel and Smalltime and San Juan La Union entries.

No entry fee in Labanan

THE FIRST EVER LABANAN STAG DERBY SEries with no entry fee required will be staged in 13 cockpits nationwide this month and October. A participant must bring proof of purchase worth P1,000 of Sagupaan Complexor 3000 or other Sagupaan products. Among the participating cockpits are: San Juan Coliseum, Pasig Square Garden, Pasay City Cockpit , Araneta Coliseum; Tuao Mega Cockpit, Solana Cockpit, Ilagan Cockpit , Vargas Cockpit , Luna Cockpit, San Manuel Cockpit, Gallera de Mandaue, Medellin Amusement Center and Simala Arena. For info, call 0916 – 4763030 (Ariel) or 0917 – 8064758 (Neil).

Las Piñas cockfest up

FAST-PACED ACTION STARTS AT 9 A.M. TODAY IN Las Piñas Coliseum's Fastest Win –One Cock Timbangan with more than 80 matches lined up. Hosts Jessie Banas and Willie Remulla said that weigh–in of entries will be held from 7-9 a.m. The fastest win champion and second placer, who will be declared after every ten fights, shall receive P20,000 and one sack of rice respectively. Entry fee is P1,100.

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SEPTEMBER 25 DRAW
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* 6 Winners of Toyota Fortuner for Metro Manila Buyers, 1 winner/day starting September 23, 2006. 1 winner for Luzon and 1 winner for Visayas & Mindanao will be drawn on October 9, 2006.
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SPORTS

Fil-Am gives up AG slot

ACADEMIC pressure at Harvard forces Jackie Pangilinan to quit Team Philippines momentarily.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PROSPECTS OF A BRIGHT PHILIPPINE SWIM campaign in the coming Asian Games dimmed further yesterday with the withdrawal of Fil-American top female bet Jackie Pangilinan due to her academic commitments at Harvard.

The Asiad stint of the Southeast Asian Games silver winner Pangilinan, RP's best bet in the breaststroke events, conflicts with her studies at the Ivy league school which grants her academic scholarship worth $48,000 annually.

Her dilemma was reported by her father Florante to the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association leadership recently.

"We have no choice but support Jackie in this but we will surely have her fighting for the golds in the 2007 SEA Games and possibly earn a slot for the Beijing Olympics," said Pasa president Mark Joseph.

Long distance expert Miguel Mendoza, the SEAG 1,500-meter freestyle champ, has earlier called it quits after finishing his studies and landing a job in the United States where he was based for several years.

Athens Olympics veteran Timmy Chua also begged off to complete his engineering degree at the University of the Philippines, while backstroke artist Lizza Danila also backed out due to her school commitments, according to Joseph.

Left to spearhead the team is 2005 Seag most outstanding athlete and now team captain Miguel Molina, who won three golds last year. Seag silver winner Erica Totten is co-captain of the women's team.

"Our Asiad team is a mix of old and new, including up and coming Olympic potentials," said Joseph. "The Doha Games will be tough but we will be there. And don't discount the possibility of a good performance from swimming's Generation Next."

He was referring to former age-group champions in the RP team—Marichi Gandiongco, Ryan Arabejo, Ernest Dee, Gerard Bordado and Fina world championship veterans Kendrick Uy and Fil-Am Daniel Coakley.

The Philippines last won a swim medal in the Asiad in 1998 with Ryan Papa securing two bronzes in the 100m and 200m backstroke.

Legazpi Milo leg kicks off Sunday

THE 30TH NATIONAL MILO MARATHON visits the Bicol region for the second time this year with Legazpi City as host on Sunday.

Because of its unprecedented undertaking of holding 30 legs all over the country in its 30th year, the Milo Marathon holds two or three elimination races in a region. And Bicol is recipient of legs—in Naga City last Aug. 6 and Legazpi.

Like in the Naga City leg held last August where first-time 21K competitor Antonio Nulial Jr. stole the limelight from his more seasoned rivals, young runners from Albay's capital city are expected to prove themselves and qualify for the 42K national finals Dec. 10 in Metro Manila.

More than 4,000 runners are expected to join the 21K elimination race, 5K fun run and kiddies 3K age-group event.

The event is in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and Powerbar. It is being organized by the provincial and city government of Albay with support from the Legazpi Jaycees and the PNP. It is being coordinated by Rustom Bustamante for the province of Albay and Luis Bello for the city.

Alcano, 3 others unscathed

REIGNING MANILA SOUTHEAST Asian Games double gold medalist Ronato Alcano posted two straight wins to tow three other Filipino pool wizards into the second round of the 2006 US Open 9-Ball championships Tuesday at the Chesapeake Conference Center in Chesapeake, Virginia.

However, defending champion Alex Pagulayan and 2005 SMB Asian 9-ball tour Singapore leg winner Gandy Valle dropped their respective matches in the second round. Pagulayan bowed to Tyler Edey while Valle yielded to Chris Bartram by similar 11-8 counts.

The 34-year-old Alcano beat Jimmy Garza, 11-4, and Adams Smith, 11-1, both from the United States, respectively.

SMB Asian 9-ball tour Taiwan leg winner Rodolfo Luat, 2005 Skins Billiards champion Santos Sambajon and Filipino pool legend Jose "Amang" Parica also posted their second straight wins.

RONATO Alcano: Ripe for success in the US pool circuit.

Luat and Sambajon, who drew byes in the first round, routed Brandon Shuff, 11-5, and Timmy Hall, 11-6, in that order.

The 54-year-old Parica, acknowledged leader of the Filipino invasion in the US pool circuit in the mid '80s, dumped Tommy Kay, 11-3, and Edward Caurera, 11-1.

Alcano, the 2002 AZ Billiards Rookie of the Year, will face Marcus Chamat of Sweden in the next round. After getting a bye in the first round, Chamat stopped the winning ways of Canadian based-Pinoy Edwin Montal, 11-4, in the second round.

Luat, Sambajon and Parica will face Rob Brandenburg, Charles Altomare and Joey Testa in the next round.

"Ronnie (Alcano) has the capacity to do well in the US Open since he has proven his worth not only in Asia but also in the US pool circuit," said businessman Perry Mariano, who is supporting Valle and several other pool players. *Marlon Bernardino*

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Northwoods, Sherwood gain edge

STANDINGS (Win-Loss-Draw-Points)

Group 1: Orchard 4-1-3-12, Forest Hills 4-0-3-12, Eastridge 2-2-3-8, Wack Wack 2-4-1-5, Riviera 0-5-2-2; **Group 2:** Sherwood Hills 5-0-2-13, Southwoods 3-1-1-9, Camp John Hay 2-2-2-6, Valley 2-4-0-4, Sta. Elena 1-5-1-3; **Group 3:** Northwoods 4-1-2-13, Alabang 3-2-2-9, Canlubang 2-2-3-7, Highlands 1-3-4-6, CDC-Mimosa 2-4-1-5

FORMER CHAMPION ROYAL NORTHwoods and Sherwood Hills gained the edge in the tight race for the two automatic semifinal slots after the penultimate day of eliminations in the Federation Golf League recently.

Northwoods dumped Canlubang, 3.5-.5, to earn a bonus point and tie Sherwood Hills for the league leadership at 13 points going into their final elimination games this weekend.

Traveling all the way to Baguio, Sherwood's bid to clinch an outright semis berth was stalled after obtaining only a 2-2 draw with sister team Camp John Hay.

Two other teams, defending champion Forest Hills and Manila Southwoods, still have a shot at the outright semis seats as they stood just a point behind the leaders with one game left.

Forest Hills was merciless against Wack Wack in a home game, taking a bonus point with a 3.5-.5 victory.

Crucial games this weekend pit Sherwood against Valley, Southwoods versus Camp John Hay, Forest Hills against out-of-the-running Eastridge and Northwoods versus Alabang.

The results of these matches will determine the pairings/seedings for the playoff rounds.

Overshadowed by the close race for the semis slots was the 3.5-.5 victory of Orchard over Riviera and Sta. Elena's 3-1 conquest of Valley.

Tagaytay Highlands and CDC-Mimosa also wrapped up their stints with a 2-2 draw.

Montana joins NBC

MONTANA PAWNSHOP-DIgos, has joined the ongoing Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament.

Owned by businessman Armando Quibod and supported by Digos City Mayor Arsenio Labasa, Montana recently finalized its entry into the country's premier regional cagefest in a meeting with NBC secretary general Tito Palma.

"I'm looking forward to developing and honing more talents through the NBC and at the same time get maximum exposure for my company in the provinces," said Quibod.

NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and his EVP, Tagaytay City Mayor Bambol Tolentino, welcomed the entry of Montana. "Mr. (Armando) Quibod and his team will definitely give a big boost to NBC. Montana has been competing in basketball, particularly the PBL, for many years now," Padilla and Tolentino noted.

Coached by Dong Cagampang and his assistant, Peter Epe, Montana will be bannered by local talents Christopher Jatico, Arturo Atablanco, Lyndie Dawal, Jeff Bajenting, Ronald Lamocha, Jonathan Edrinal, Mark Bonifacio and Randy Panerio.

Montana and three other teams—Bacchus/Harbour Centre-San Juan, Cellular Pawnshop and Osmeña-Cebu—have yet to make their debut in the tourney sponsored by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Nature's Spring, Molten, Holiday Plaza Hotel-Cebu and Prime Channel. Tagaytay Spring Oil is the early leader with three straight wins.

MVBA leg opens Oct. 1 at Xavier

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE SECOND CONFERence of the Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) will hold its opening rites on Oct. 1 at the Xavier University Gym with league chair Gov. Oscar S. Moreno as host.

Formal hostilities begin when Governor Moreno's Misamis Oriental team visits expansion team Lanao del Norte of Gov. Imelda Q. Dimaporo at the ultra modern Mindanao Civic Center in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, on Oct. 5.

The other expansion teams are Bayawan City, Negros Oriental of Mayor German P. Sarana in the Visayas Division and the Duterte-Davao Agilas of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte in the Mindanao Division—raising the MVBA's membership to 12 teams.

According to Lanao head coach and provincial sports coordinator Nelson Lasola, the team will be composed of local talents and a few players from nearby provinces plus 6-foot-6 center Jeff Mella of Nueva Ecija.

Meanwhile, Coach Rex Salvana will parade old hands Dondon Mendoza, Ramil Tagupa and Jesson Alfeche plus new recruits Gilbert Demape and Jerome Barbosa.

Jota drag racing Driver of the Year

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—BLANCHE Racing's Dave Jota saved his best for last, posting the crucial win and bagging the Drag Racing Driver of the Year award yesterday in the 2006 Red Horse National Drag Racing Championship Series at the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

He didn't break the record time of 11.092 seconds, but his pacing was just perfect to conserve his engine and unleash his best performance on his final run in this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines.

Jota clocked 11.484 seconds in booting out Marvin Suzara of Team Ere on his first run, and prevailed in the much-awaited showdown with arch rival and Team Ere driver Jonathan Tiu in the semifinal round with a time of 11.364 seconds.

DAVE Jota flashes a victory smile.

The secret behind Bata Reyes' magic

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

FIVE DAYS AFTER, people are still talking about that miraculous last-second shot of the Ateneo Blue Eagles in Game One of the UAAP best-of-three championship series at the Araneta Coliseum.

Unless my memory is floundering, I don't remember seeing anything like it in the last three decades. Neither does UAAP commissioner Elmer Yanga.

For NCAA commissioner Jun Bernardino, however, the feat was not that rare. He said he has seen it done locally and internationally a number of times.

For Ateneo coach Norman Black, it was déjà vu. He experienced the same scenario years ago back in high school.

* * *

When the UST Tigers converted with a second left to take the lead by one, everyone believed the game was over. I saw Ateneo patron Manny Pangilinan slump on his seat and sulk in resignation as the UST bench rejoiced.

Indeed, what could happen in a second?

Well the near-impossible did. It seemed like a scene from the Bible. The Red Sea parted, enabling inbounder Macky Escalona to make a clean pass to the wide open Doug Kramer.

Following the impossible shot, the Ateneo gallery came alive, while the UST bench and fans were too stunned to react.

* * *

Efren "Bata" Reyes is one superstar sportsman who doesn't allow fame and fortune to get to his head.

We bumped into Bata during the Solar launch of Basketball Television at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati last Monday. Unlike Manny Pacquiao, he didn't have a phalanx of bodyguards, close-in security and hangers on around him.

But that familiar, toothless smile, the humble demeanor, are still there.

* * *

Bata said he continues to observe the practice of not taking a bath during a tournament to preserve luck in his aura.

"*Sabi kasi ng mga matatanda sa amin, may agimat daw ako na nagbibigay ng galing. Pag naligo ako* during a tournament, *baka mawala yung galing. Sabi nila, habang buhay kong dadalhin ang agimat na ito, kahit na tumanda ako*," Bata said.

The man aptly tagged "The Magician" is now 52 years old. He started playing billiards when he was only 8, which means he has been playing the game for 44 years.

Bata intends to invest part of the millions of pesos he won from the ITP 8-ball World Pool Championship to a poultry business. He also plans to build a house for his son.

* * *

Just as the name of the new Solar channel implies, marketing manager Jude Turcuato said Basketball Television or BTV will be a purely basketball channel, bannered by the NBA games.

"But it is more than the NBA. We will also air other international and local tournaments, including cage news and features. Anything significant about basketball, we will air," Jude said.

Solar is covering the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, this December, in cooperation with NBN-4. Jude is hoping we can still send a basketball team to compete in the two-week meet.

* * *

HOOPVINE: Jun Bernardino had to watch last Sunday's Ateneo-UST game standing. Elmer Yanga had given him a seat at commissioner's row, from where he watched the juniors' game, but when he left after the match to take a breather, somebody took it. Jun tried to retrieve the seat but he had no ticket to show. The new occupant had a ticket... Hmmmm. I wonder who has been selling tickets to the commissioner's row... Unofficial nominations are ongoing in the newly formed Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas for the various executive positions. Among those nominated for the post of executive director are Chito Narvasa, Elmer Yanga, Ed Cordero and Frankie Lim.

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GSIS sells EPCIB stake for ₱8.7B

Accepts Sy's tender offer at P92 a share

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED GOVERNMENT SERVICE INsurance System (GSIS) yesterday signed a deal to sell its 12.7-percent stake in Equitable PCI Bank to the group of retail tycoon Henry Sy for P8.7 billion.

The sale of the GSIS block brings the SM group another step closer to its goal of taking over the country's third biggest bank and eventually merging it with its own banking arm, Banco De Oro Universal Bank.

In a statement, GSIS president Winston Garcia said the state-owned pension fund would use the proceeds from the sale to increase lending to members and augment its investment portfolio.

The transaction involves 95 million common shares at P92 a share.

The SM group, the single biggest stockholder in EPCIBank with a 34-percent stake, earlier made a tender offer to buy out all other shareholders at P92 a share--the same price demanded by the GSIS when it opposed BDO's earlier offer to merge with EPCIBank.

The tender offer will lapse today, but EPCIB vice chair Teresita Sy said the SM group would not know how much shares were tendered until later today.

The SM group needs to acquire 67-percent voting rights to merge BDO and EPCIBank, whose consolidation could dislodge Bank of the Philippine Islands as the country's second largest bank.

Aside from acquiring the GSIS stake, the Sys' investment arm SM Investments Corp. is also set to buy the 10.8-percent stake in EPCIB owned by EBC Investments Inc. valued at P7.25 billion. The EPCIB approved the sale of this block in compliance with an order from the Bangko Sentral

GSIS/ B4

Time to go public for SMEs, family-owned companies

By Daxim L. Lucas

WHILE MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL HESITANT to call it a bull run, the recent winning streak of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) index may just be the start of an extended uptrend.

As such, the buoyant market sentiment may potentially benefit not only stock market investors but even small companies planning to raise funds to expand their businesses.

Thus said investment banker Antonio B. Herbosa who recently urged family-run firms to take advantage of recent market developments, including new listing rules which allow companies to go public "the painless way."

"What we want to do is help family-run businesses professionalize," he said in an interview. "Part of this process includes listing on the stock exchange."

Herbosa is in charge of a unit with accounting and consultancy firm Punongbayan & Araullo, which specializes in helping family-run firms develop their potential, whether they are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) or large corporations.

In a presentation before businessmen, he said he recognized the fact that not all family-run firms were ready to list on the stock exchange, but outlined the benefits of doing so.

TIME/ B2

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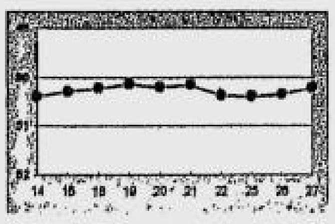
INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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STOCK MARKET

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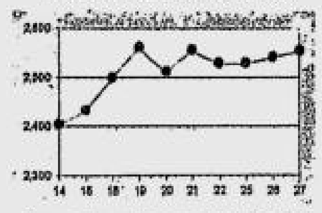

(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close higher on strong Wall St. rally

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.48-percent higher yesterday, mirroring the upbeat mood in Asian markets after strong gains overnight took Wall Street to near record levels, dealers said.

They said the advance was also supported by quarter-end window-dressing.

The composite index added 12.23 points to 2,556.71 after trading between 2,548.62 and 2,568.53. Gainers led losers 60 to 41, with 53 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 1.24 billion shares worth P3.3 billion.

SHARES/ B4

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Mindanao focuses on China

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPment is arguably the most amazing economic success story of the past 25 years.

Started in 1978 with the Chinese government's market oriented reforms, China's economy has posted consistent growth, marked by booming exports and massive inflows of foreign investment.

Today, China's economy is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and Japan.

It is also the world's fourth biggest trading nation.

And believe it or not, early this year, China displaced the United States as the world's biggest holder of foreign exchange reserves with close to a trillion dollars in its vaults.

Dramatic reduction

Amid this exciting landscape of high-speed economic expansion, poverty has been dramatically reduced from more than 50 percent in 1981 to only 8 percent in 2001— giving rise to a burgeoning middle class.

While China is already one of the world's most efficient producers of goods, with average trade surpluses of about $100 billion annually, it may also well become the world's biggest consumer of goods, with hundreds of millions of people joining the ranks of the affluent.

Rough estimates put the number of Chinese middle class at 200 million, and growing fast as economic development reaches out to the more populous Central and Northeast regions.

It is against this backdrop that Mindanao producers have drawn up a program to access the vast China market.

Since 2002, Mindanao producers have embarked on an aggressive campaign to promote Mindanao exports to China.

Commodities identified to export include those already abundant in the island, like fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, fresh and processed fish and high-value seaweeds and carageenan, rubber and other industrial crops including coco-based products.

These products have been showcased in various exhibitions.

I remember heading the Mindanao delegation to China in 2003 for the Philippine Solo Exhibit in Shanghai.

This was followed by the China Seafood Show in Quingdao in 2004 and the China Goods Procurement Fair in Shenzhen in 2005.

Through the assistance of the USAID Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM), the Mindanao exporters were able to promote their products to the huge China market and meet up with prospective buyers and distributors.

More importantly, the trade shows updated them on emerging trends in product quality, packaging and consumer preferences and enabled them to benchmark their products against competition.

Trade shows

Just recently, the GEM Program and the Department of Agriculture (DA) jointly organized a Mindanao delegation to the China World of Food Exhibit in Shanghai, one of the biggest international food shows in China and a satellite show of the prestigious Anuga Fair held annually in Germany.

The Mindanao delegation was composed of 17 companies, mostly small and medium scale firms engaged in fruits, fish and other foods.

The best-sellers during the Shanghai foodshow were banana chips, processed mango, bottled sardines and coco-based products.

According to some Mindanao exhibitors, tropical fruits—whether fresh or processed—are in great demand in Shanghai, a highly-urbanized region of China with the highest per capita consumption of imported fruits and vegetables.

Shanghai is also the home of the biggest expatriate community in China.

This explains the surprisingly high interest in bottled sardines. Chinese residents traditionally prefer live fish over frozen and processed fish products.

Beyond the trade exhibits, Mindanao producers are also working to resolve important trade-related issues.

The strong lobby of Mindanao producer groups, like the Minfruit Council and the Southern Mindanao Mango Council, successfully negotiated with the Chinese government simpler (and cheaper) quarantine protocols for the shipment of fresh mangoes into the mainland, boosting the local mango sector.

China is fast becoming an important export market for Philippine fresh mangoes.

Shipments of fresh mango to China rose more than twenty times from a measly 114 metric tons in 2001 to 2,800 MT in 2005, a clear indication of the growing Chinese preference for the sweet tasting Philippine carabao mango.

Philippine mango has also started to penetrate the Central and Northern Region, albeit in limited quantities.

Overall growth prospects for mango exports to China remain very high and fruit supply might be the only limiting factor for expansion.

Other prevailing developments also augur well for expanding trade with China.

Early this year, the full implementation of the Philippines-China Early Harvest Program (EHP) started.

The EHP is another positive factor for the growth agri-based exports to China as tariffs on the trading of fresh and semi-processed agricultural products have been effectively removed.

Mindanao products, such as fresh fruits including banana, pineapple, mango and papaya as well as fish like tuna, are covered in the EHP and will therefore enjoy zero tariffs in the China market.

Lastly, but more importantly, bilateral ties between Philippines and China are warming up as the two countries recently marked 30 years of formal diplomatic relations.

Leaders of the two countries exchanged high-profile state visits to celebrate the landmark event, committing to bring existing bilateral relations to a "golden age of comprehensive cooperation and partnership."

Greater cooperation

Sectors high on the cooperation list are agriculture and fisheries, tourism, energy, infrastructure and development financing.

The two countries' common goal: To increase total bilateral trade from the present $13 B to $30 B in five years.

Mindanao, the Philippine's main agricultural producer, will definitely play an important role in this expanding bilateral economic partnership.

Joji Ilagan Bian is a strong advocate for Mindanao; chair, Mindanaworld Foundation Inc.; ConCom and Charter change Advocacy Commission Member; chair of the Mindanao TVET; Mindanao Rep, Export Development Council; chair, Joji Ilagan Foundation; former chair of the Mindanao Business Council. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com

Time to go public for SMEs, family-owned firms

From page B1

And while the process of listing a firm's shares on the stock market used to be a daunting and expensive exercise, new rules put in place by the PSE have simplified and shortened the process, and perhaps more importantly, made it more affordable to smaller firms.

New reasons for listing

One such scheme is called "listing by way of introduction."

Simply put, this scheme developed by the PSE allows a firm to list its shares on the exchange without having to float or sell new or existing shares to the public.

For tightly held, family-run companies, the implications of this definition are tremendous.

"This is very important for owners who don't want to see their holdings diluted or for those who don't want to be threatened by outside buyers," Herbosa said.

The investment banker explained that this was especially relevant in the Philippine setting, and also gives a new twist to the whole concept of listing shares on the stock exchange.

While raising funds has traditionally been the main rationale for going on an initial public offering (IPO), more and more companies are taking this route even though they have no need for fresh cash.

Take the example of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr.'s SM Investments Corp. or Lucio Tan's Baguio Gold Holdings. Both taipans are cash-rich and have no need to tap the capital market for money. Yet they did list their shares on the exchange. Why?

"Estate planning is one aspect of this operation," Herbosa said, explaining that family-run firms, whether big or small, may take advantage of the stock exchange for reducing their tax liabilities when ownership is passed on from one generation to another.

"Many family-owned firms list [on the stock market] for tax considerations," he said.

Indeed, transferring shares from one generation to another by selling them would entail a 10-percent capital gains tax levy. Estate taxes are even heftier for assets over P10 million, with the taxman levying P1.2 million plus 20 percent of everything in excess of P10 million.

"If you're listed, all you have to pay is a transaction tax of one-fourth of one percent plus VAT (value-added tax)," Herbosa said.

Easier access to credit

Apart from tax considerations, there are also other advantages for firms to list, according to the PSE.

"Shareholder goodwill is increased as buying and selling [of company shares] become easier," PSE vice president for capital markets development Melchor C. Guerrero said. "The visibility of market performance is also enhanced."

For companies which do need money, on the other hand, he explained that listing on the stock exchange often enhances their access to credit especially because creditors like banks or buyers of their debt paper will have an easier way of valuing the firm.

"If the market value of the company's equity is at a premium over book value, creditors will be persuaded to lend more," he said.

Guerrero explained that small companies that have big plans may also leverage their listing on the stock exchange for their future growth, especially if owners have their eye on buying or merging with other firms.

"It will be easier for mergers since the market price is established," he said, referring to the daily closing price of listed firms which is the main gauge for valuing the entire company.

At the same time, listed firms are also covered in greater detail by the media which improves their "market visibility."

"The financial press carries the full details of listed trading so shareholders can easily follow transactions and quotations, while unlisted companies are reported in less detail," he said.

Timing is key

Punongbayan's Herbosa points out, however, that timing was very important when a company lists its shares on the exchange, whether it is a large corporation or a family-run business.

Historically, most firms choose to go public during a stock market bull run so they can demand a higher premium for the shares they sell.

With PSE's "listing by introduction" scheme, however, Herbosa points out that a company can already join the stock exchange while waiting for the opportune time to capitalize on fund-raising opportunities.

He explained that it would be easier for a company to eventually sell shares to the public if it has already gotten the formalities of listing out of the way early on.

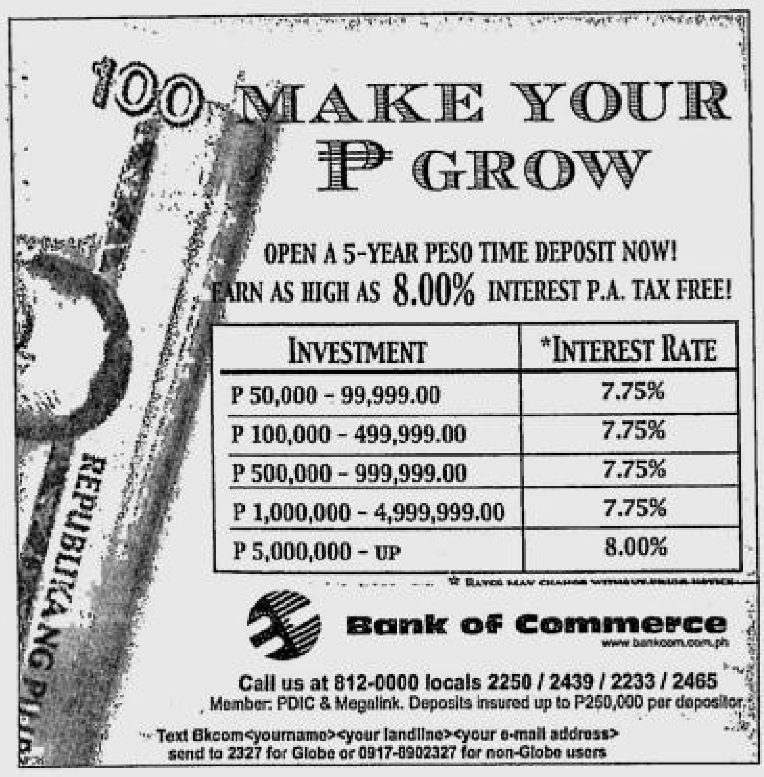
"Listing by way of introduction makes a company ready to take advantage of an upturn," he said.

So when is the right time?

"The time to go public will be within the next two years," Herbosa ventured, noting that more and more people have idle savings looking for better returns.

"There is money in the closet waiting to be invested in companies that will go IPO," he said, adding that the key drivers existed at present for a prolonged bull market until 2008.

For family-run businesses and SMEs, such a window may not open again in a long time.



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Per DTI Permit # 1576 Series of 2006

Half a million OFWs joined SSS, contributed $854M as of end -'05

By Doris C. Dumlao

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS ENLISTED with the state-owned Social Security System have exceeded the 500,000 mark, contributing $854 million in membership dues to the pension fund.

In a statement yesterday, the SSS, which wants the government to require OFWs to register as members of the pension fund prior to their departure, announced that its total OFW membership reached 515,000 as of end-2005 compared to only about 55,000 in 1999. Total contributions during the period also surged from the $95 million level as of 1999.

But despite the increase in the OFW membership with the state-owned pension fund, this still represented a small fraction of the total Filipino population working abroad. Unofficial estimates placed the number of Filipinos in more than 190 countries at eight million, which comprise 20 percent of the total productive labor force of the country.

At least 4.8 million of these OFWs are migrant workers who have specific contracts and have no proper documentation.

SSS president and CEO Corazon dela Paz said majority of the OFW members were in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Brunei and oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"The increased enrollment of OFW's with the SSS reflects our intensified efforts to provide social security protection to our overseas workers," Dela Paz said.

Vice President Noli de Castro earlier encouraged the SSS to intensify its social security programs for OFWs.

He cited the Flexi-fund, a tax-exempt savings and pension plan, which is on top of the regular social security program offered by the institution. About 16,000 are enrolled in the Flexi-fund.

De Castro said the recent conflict in Lebanon highlighted the needs of OFWs and cited SSS as one of the first government agencies to respond to the call to provide social security protection to the sector.

He also lauded the SSS' efforts to enter into bilateral social security agreements with countries that employ a substantial number of Filipino workers in addition to existing agreements with Austria, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Spain, France, Canada and Quebec, Switzerland, Belgium and South Korea.

Gov't cuts local borrowing plan

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY HAS slashed its local borrowing program for the year by 12 percent to P270.9 billion from the original ceiling of P310.2 billion, taking advantage of recent gains from the government's fiscal reforms.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz announced yesterday that the agency would offer as much treasury bills and bonds in the fourth quarter as was issued through local auctions in the third quarter in line with the government's strategy of reducing its foreign debts.

Aside from reducing the full-year local securities issuance, the fourth-quarter program would cut this year's borrowings through treasury auctions by 37 percent from P432.8 billion in 2005.

"The borrowing program for the quarter is consistent with the fiscal progress and overperformance achieved by the government and with its debt strategy of moving away from foreign to domestic borrowing," Cruz said.

This is seen bringing the government's borrowing mix to 42:58 in terms of foreign-to-domestic debt ratio.

The government is also set to evaluate at the end of this month the merits of buying back about $364 million worth of remaining Brady bonds, Cruz said in a recent interview at the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund-World Bank meetings in Singapore.

The Brady bonds were named after Nicholas Brady, the Treasury chief of the United States during the time of President Ronald Reagan who proposed the issuance of these debt paper to help heavily indebted countries like the Philippines restructure their commercial bank debt starting in the 1980s.

These old bonds have become more expensive compared to newer global bond floats as interest rate spreads tightened over the years following improvements in the government's fiscal position.

Meanwhile, Cruz admitted that the results of the Philippine sovereign's latest offshore bond exchange was disappointing for some investors. Out of the nearly $12 billion worth of short- and medium-term government debt notes on offer, only $1 billion was taken out and swapped with $1.2 billion in fresh IOUs.

"Those people who were greedy and offered it at more aggressive prices ended picking those up in the secondary market at worse terms," he explained.

"They assumed that we will go the Columbia way—that we would pay up. But they should know the (Philippine government IOUs) better. We never pay up because the deal size is not the measure of success."

In finance, to "pay up" means to accept loss in cash arising from a swap into higher-priced bonds.

Doris C. Dumlao

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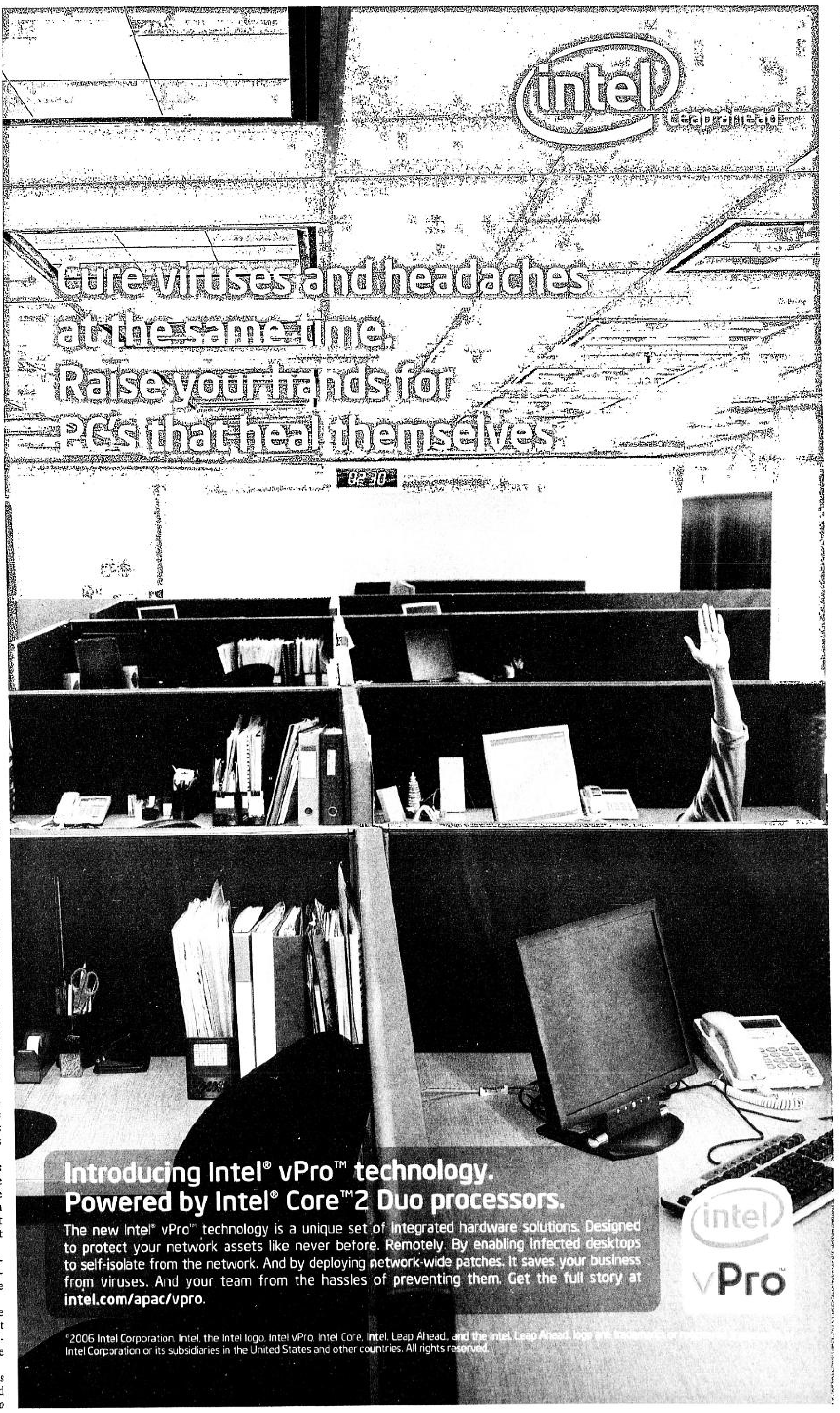

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Listed firms raised ₱31.5B from market in first 8 months

Growth prospects whet investor appetite for stocks

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LISTED COMPANIES RAISED SOME P31.5 billion in fresh capital in the first eight months of the year through initial public offerings, sales of additional shares and stock rights offering, Philippine Stock Exchange data showed.

The amount was, however, lower than year-ago's P50.3 billion, which was boosted by the IPOs held by Manila Water Corp. of the Ayala group and SM Investments Corp. of mall tycoon Henry Sy.

For this year, the bulk of the capital raised came from the IPOs held by power producer First Generation Corp. (P9 billion), snack foods maker Universal Robina Corp. (P4.8 billion primary offer only), Megaworld Corp. (P5.6 billion) and online broker Citiseconline (P150 million), as well as from Ayala Corp.'s preferred B shares offering (P5.8 billion).

The 8-month data does not include the P222 million generated by Aboitiz Equity Ventures from the sale of its treasury shares last week.

Expectations of a stronger economic growth—propped up by the peso appreciation and the softening of interest rates—whetted investor appetite for stocks, market analysts said.

"It's good timing and good companies," Joseph Roxas , president at Eagle Equities said.

Secondary offers or the sale of shares owned by existing shareholders from January to August amounted to P8.2 billion. Of the amount, Megaworld accounted for P583 million while the balance was raised by URC.

The record does not reflect yet the sale last week by the Zobel family's holding firm Mermac Inc. of its 6.9-percent stake in Ayala Corp, which fetched P10.6 billion.

For the whole year of 2005, secondary offerings raised a total of P5.3 billion.

"Investors are bullish on the prospects of local stocks in the next 12 months. Secondary offerings, like the recent ones, offer value since they are priced at a significant discount to the current market price," Paul Joseph Garcia, ING Investment Management chief investment officer in the Philippines, said.

GSIS sells . . .

From page B1

ng Pilipinas.

Garcia said the GSIS would continue to invest in government securities.

"We will also hire private fund managers to help run our investment portfolio," Garcia said.

To GSIS and others who will accept SM's offer, the Sys intend to pay 10 percent of the total price on Oct. 2, another 10 percent on June 2, 2007, another 10 percent on Feb. 2, 2008, and the remaining 70 percent on Oct. 2, 2008.

If computed against net present value, the SM group's offer amounts to about P80 a share based on an assumed two-year bond yield of 8 percent.

A merger between EPCIB and BDO will create the country's second biggest banking group with combined assets of P528.6 billion (excluding China Banking Corp.), next to Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.'s consolidated assets of P594 billion.

Shares . . .

From page B1

"The positive sentiment on Wall Street spilled over into Asian markets this morning," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

This has boosted optimism that the Philippine market will sustain its rally.

"The economic fundamentals are sound. The peso is stable. I think the market is now gathering momentum before re-testing the key resistance level of 2,600 points," said Harry Liu of Summit Securities Inc.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the most actively traded stock, rose P15 to P2,270, tracking gains in its New York-listed shares.

Conglomerate SM Investments Corp. advanced P2 to P250 and unit Banco de Oro jumped P1.50 to a record P40 amid growing hopes that the bank will be merged with rival Equitable PCI Bank. *AFP*

Escalation clues

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WAS IT GOOD OR WAS IT BAD FOR THE SENate?

I refer to all that fuss in the hallowed chamber, featuring the headline-grabbing arrest warrants for PCGG officials, for example.

The Senate issued them in connection with its inquiry—well, "in aid of legislation," of course—into the internal affairs of the sequestered Philcomsat group.

The group only happened to be holding its 20th year of wacky boardroom intramural among the belligerent stockholders.

In effect, one group of stockholders was accusing another group of "misuse" of corporate funds, with one court case after another flying all over the place.

Leading the attack were Victor Africa and Erlinda Ilusorio-Bildner, whose group took over two corporations called POTC and Philcomsat about six years ago.

On the defensive side was supposedly the camp of government nominees in the board of another company called Philcomsat Holdings Corp. or PHC.

For whatever reason, the Senate committee on government corporations and public enterprise, headed by Sen. Richard Gordon, saw it fit to look into the matter.

According to media reports, the Senate inquiry "in aid of legislation" has escalated to a constitutional crisis: Who between the executive and the legislative will blink?

To think, as proof of the "misuse" of funds, the senators initially hinged their call for an investigation on "cars" that the company allegedly bought for board members.

It's not as if the Senate thinks that if it fails to investigate corporations that buy cars for its officers and directors, the world will end the next day.

But all government outfits buy cars, okay! Jet planes, agreed, are something else. Don't you think, bossing, we have many other problems in this country?

Down here in my *barangay*, the guys could not just accept the "car issue" as the be-all-and-end-all of the investigation, and there could only be something else.

Taking a high profile in the Senate investigation was Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile or JPE, who already threatened PCGG officials with libel cases for saying that he had "vested interests" in the Philcomsat group.

JPE insisted that the stake of his daughter, Katrina, in the Philicomsat group had nothing to do with his fight to end corruption in Philcomsat.

I guess I can live with JPE's explanation, although I don't think that it sits well with the other guys down here in my *barangay*, simply because JPE—in fact—is an original incorporator of the business group under the Marcos dictatorship.

Today's holdings of Katrina Ponce Enrile, who now heads the Jaka conglomerate of the Enrile family, are the same holdings of JPE during martial rule.

Precisely because of such an irregular situation, which in my book is an obvious conflict of interest, JPE volunteered to inhibit himself from the Senate investigation.

Yet the good senator could not keep his word, as he virtually took over from Senate committee chair Gordon the questioning of the witness in a recent hearing.

As a clue to further escalation of the word war, word goes around that certain board directors are filing a complaint against JPE before the Senate ethics committee.

In other words, this whole mess is not about to end. It so happens that the Senate is only the highest policy-making body in this country with millions of problems.

To think, several cases between the warring stockholders have been filed in the Court of Appeals and the Sandiganbayan, and even the Supreme Court.

And so the Senate hearings will go on duplicating the court hearings on the ongoing cases involving, precisely, the same Philcomsat group.

How pleasing is that to the public, considering that not a few of the guys down here in my *barangay* already think of the Senate as an expensive circus?

* * *

RECENTLY, the BCDA held a public bidding for some 1.2 hectares of prime land, which was nicknamed "Big Delta," at the fast-developing high-end area in Metro Manila called the Fort.

As such, you would think that real estate companies would fall over each other, rushing to bid for such a sure-hit property at the Fort. Think again!

Word has it that, out of the 11 top real estate companies that bought the "terms of reference" for the bidding, the BCDA got a total of zero bids.

For that kind of property, nobody is biting, even at a time when real estate is said to be moving up?

What's more, the BCDA public information office brushed the whole thing away as nothing to do with the raging issue on this cute administration's use of military troops to take over the seaport at Poro Point from the private contractor.

If that was true, how come the BCDA was trying to set up a P6.5-million PR campaign?

Reports had it that BCDA was trying to convince the Palace that the "commando-like" raid would have little impact on investor confidence.

Sure, except that one German group already postponed its investments, pointing at the Poro Point incident as the cause.

For what was the message of the Poro Point story to business in general?

Well, under this cute administration, if the government wants to take your business, whether you like it or not, the government will just send the troops, period.

* * *

LAST WEEK, the DepEd launched a new version of the "adopt a school" program.

The new program basically offers "packages" to the private sector—i.e. the various foundations of those tycoons—in such area of education as infrastructure, teacher training, support to students, computer learning, and health.

In other words, instead of the business people having to rock their brains to come up with projects for the school system, the DepEd now has a "menu" from which the donors can choose.

It is much more simple for the donors. You know—less work for an equal savings in tax payments!

LRWC ups stake in gaming firm

BINGO OPERATOR LEISURE AND RESORTS World Corp. has raised its stake in a Cagayan economic zone Internet gaming licensor to 69.7 percent from 35 percent.

LRWC told the Philippine Stock Exchange in a disclosure yesterday that it had completed the purchase of 31,250 shares of First Cagayan Leisure and Resort Corp. from holding firm Joanna Heights Inc. for P800 a share or P25 million.

First Cagayan has a license agreement with the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Ceza) to develop, operate and conduct Internet and gaming enterprises and facilities in the Cagayan Special Economic Zone Freeport (CSEZFP).

In view of this license agreement, First Cagayan was issued a master licensor certificate, which authorizes it to regulate and monitor the licensing and operation of interactive games in the zone.

As of Dec. 31, 2005, First Cagayan has 15 licensed locators, of which six interactive gaming licenses are already operating.

In a related development, LRWC's wholly-owned subsidiary AB Leisure Exponent Inc. has approved the purchase of 100 percent or 5,000 shares of a bingo parlor operator in the Greenhills Shopping Center in Ortigas City.

The acquisition of SG Amusement and Recreation Corp. is in line with ABLE's thrust to put up bingo boutiques nationwide.Elizabeth L. Sanchez

RFM beefing up funds for expansion

FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRM RFM CORP. WILL raise up to P500 million in fresh cash possibly through borrowings and equity infusion, RFM president Jose Ma. Concepcion III said after the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday.

Concepcion said RFM was in talks with First Metro Investment Corp. (FMIC) to take the lead in determining ways to go about the proposed fund-raising exercise.

The amount to be raised will be used to fund working capital, capital expenditure, and sales and marketing activities.

RFM said that in the first eight months, it posted a net income of P109 million, up from P39 million last year. Gross profit margins—or sales less the cost of goods sold—grew by 25 percent during the period.

Last year, RFM posted a net income of P168 million, a reversal of the P427 million in losses the previous year, after cutting down expenses and writing down investments in its affiliate Swift Foods.

In the meantime, the company launched last week its fortified filled milk product in tetra packs, the first of its kind in the market.

Marketed as a "growing up" milk, the fortified filled milk comes in three affordable sizes 150 milliliters (P6.85), 250 ml (P12.50) and 1 liter (P43).

RFM introduced in 2005 products that helped strengthen its brands such as Swift All Meat brown hotdogs, Swift Juicy Corned Beef in foil packs, and an improved Swift Carne Norte. RFM's branded food business corners 45.2 percent of total sales.

The company also produces and sells Fiesta pasta, White King flour mixes, ready-to-drink Sunkist juice and tea, Swift processed and canned meats and Selecta ice cream in a joint venture with the Unilever Group. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

DISCLOSURES

IMPERIAL Resources Inc. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Nov. 14, 10 a.m. at the Manila Golf and Country Club in Forbes Park, Makati.

* * *

LAWYER Elmer B. Serrano was named corporate secretary of **Crown Equities Inc.**, replacing Antonio A. Picazo, who resigned effective Oct. 1.

* * *

ZEUS Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Nov. 20, 3:30 p.m. at the Lepanto Building in Makati City.

* * *

RUBEN R. Victa has been elected vice president in charge of **Security Bank Corp.**'s corporate relationship group effective Nov. 2. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of September 27, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.7	87,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	38.5	40	38.5	40	951,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	59	59	58.5	58.5	1,993,200
China Banking Corp.	690	690	685	685	2,320
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	15,030,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	75.5	76	75	75.5	6,122,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	40.5	41	40	41	514,600
Philippine National Bank	33.5	33.5	33	33	7,700
Phil. Savings Bank	43	43	43	43	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18	18.25	18	18.25	20,500
Security Bank Corp.	51.5	51.5	51	51.5	200,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	44.5	45	44.5	45	12,400
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	10,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.8	232,000
First Abacus Financial	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	50,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1635	1635	1610	1610	380
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.08	1,450,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2080	2085	2065	2085	1,280
Ivantage Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	865,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	49	49	49	49	765,400
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	49.5	50	49.5	50	2,003,300
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	67,200
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	29.5	29	29.5	464,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	636,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.1	4.15	3,021,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	350,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	12,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	22.5	22.75	84,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35	36	35	35.5	161,200
Pancake House Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	9,000
RFM Corp.	0.87	0.9	0.87	0.89	920,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	51,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.22	0.24	0.22	0.24	130,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65	65	64.5	65	55,100
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	76	74.5	76	165,100
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.25	18	18	18,218,600
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	1,000,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.78	1.82	1.78	1.82	2,495,000
Holcim Philippines, Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.9	637,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	18,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	26,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	4	4.2	3.9	4.05	3,492,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.59	0.61	0.58	0.59	141,200,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.145	5,980,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	250,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	47,000,000
Ayala Corp.	475	477.5	472.5	475	267,730
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	295,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	22,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2	2.04	2	2.04	2,233,000
APC Group Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.24	0.24	590,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	12,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	650,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.15	3.15	242,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.08	120,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.28	8,999,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.75	3,863,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.65	2.65	2,144,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.28	1.36	1.28	1.32	2,109,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	5.9	6	2,820,000
Keppel Holdings	1	1	1	1	30,000
Medco Holdings	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.22	1,562,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	10,800,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.185	0.19	0.18	0.19	2,060,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	800,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	1,700,000
SM Investments Corp.	248	250	247	250	329,300
South China Resources Inc.	0.94	0.98	0.93	0.98	520,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	300,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	50,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.25	14.25	15,348,000
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	5,493,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1	1.02	0.99	1.02	500,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	200,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.2	1.48	1.2	1.48	50,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	6,300,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.51	0.55	0.51	0.54	53,280,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.98	1.1	0.98	1.06	1,360,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.56	1.64	1.56	1.64	48,786,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.28	2.28	2.26	2.26	40,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	15,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.28	6,240,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.72	0.55	0.7	14,030,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.92	76,865,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	781,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	20,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	310,000
SM Development Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.82	1.84	1,216,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.4	3,119,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	2,300,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	69,900
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.24	1.28	1.24	1.28	1,470,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1075	1085	1075	1080	38,500
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	4.6	4.65	4.6	4.65	5,602,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2255	2275	2255	2270	430,690
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.195	0.185	0.195	400,000
Imperial Res.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	5,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.96	1.98	1.96	1.98	77,000
Ipvg Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	1,050,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,000,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	6,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.14	1.2	1.14	1.2	186,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	240,000
Philweb Corp.	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.03	25,300,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals, Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	750,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	12,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	16.5	17	16.5	16.75	502,200
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	2,100,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.98	2	1.98	2	4,058,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	150,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople, Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	5,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.12	2.06	2.06	2,620,000
Paxys Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	639,300
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.2	6.4	5.9	6	2,795,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.4	6.4	5.9	6.1	1,100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	60,700,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.2	8.3	8.2	8.2	362,000
Benguet Corp. A	10.75	10.75	10	10	69,200
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.24	0.245	7,360,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	8,580,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	68,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	63,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	283,300,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	4,719,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	18.75	20.5	18.75	20.5	255,700
Vulcan Ind'l	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.59	370,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated, Inc.	0.28	0.31	0.28	0.3	19,590,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	58,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1	1	0.98	1	1,070,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1	1.02	1	1	550,000
Pnoc Exploration Corp.-B	12	12	12	12	8,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.7	10.25	9.7	10	130,000

CURRENCIES

September 27, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.788084	1.000000	50.3870
Japan	Yen	0.006729	0.008538	0.4302
United Kingdom	Pound	1.492553	1.893900	95.4279
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.101205	0.128419	6.4706
Switzerland	Franc	0.633814	0.804246	40.5235
Canada	Dollar	0.707563	0.897827	45.2388
Singapore	Dollar	0.495869	0.629208	31.7039
Australia	Dollar	0.592233	0.751484	37.8650
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.090575	2.652731	133.6632
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.210151	0.266660	13.4362
Brunei	Dollar	0.494314	0.627235	31.6045
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000108	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021016	0.026667	1.3437
UAE	Dirham	0.214579	0.272279	13.7193
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.268900	63.9361
Argentina	Peso	0.254221	0.322581	16.2539
Brazil	Real	0.357814	0.454030	22.8772
Denmark	Kroner	0.134026	0.170065	8.5691
India	Rupee	0.017218	0.021848	1.1009
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214212	0.271813	13.6958
Mexico	New Peso	0.071549	0.090789	4.5746
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525109	0.666311	33.5734
Norway	Kroner	0.120467	0.152861	7.7022
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013015	0.016515	0.8321
South Africa	Rand	0.102934	0.130613	6.5812
Korea	Won	0.000835	0.001059	0.0534
Sweden	Kroner	0.107402	0.136282	6.8668
Syria	Pound	0.015182	0.019264	0.9707
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023932	0.030367	1.5301
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000367	0.000466	0.0235

SuperFerry's Buy One Take One Fiesta Fare Promo

IN LINE WITH ITS ONGOING DISCOUNT promos, leading shipping company SuperFerry announces its latest offering – The Buy One Take One Fiesta Fare Promo for the Manila-Bacolod-Manila route (to support the Masskara Festival in Bacolod, the famous City of Smiles) and the Manila-Zamboanga-Manila route (to support the La Hermosa Festival in Zamboanga, the famous City of Flowers).

The selling period for the Masskara Festival is from Sept. 24 to 30, and the sailing period from Oct. 11 to 23 only.

The selling period for the La Hermosa Festival is from Sept. 24 to 30, and the sailing period from Oct. 9 to 15 only.

According to Andrew Deyto, AVP for marketing, "This particular promo is aligned with our objective of encouraging cost-effective travel during festivals or fiesta, which we intend to do every month year-round. This is in line with SuperFerry's continuous effort in helping promote tourism by encouraging low-cost travel to different regions."

"Now, our passengers may choose to go back home to celebrate an important event in their hometown, via the Fiesta Promo, and avail of their return trip for free," he added. The promo, Deyto said, comprises the use of all accommodations, including cabin and stateroom.

As part of the Masskara festivities, SuperFerry will also hold the grand raffle draw of its Sakay Panalo Mega Papremyo Raffle Promo for Manila-Bacolod travelers on Oct. 13, featuring one of the hottest OPM bands in the country today - Parokya ni Edgar.

For more details, call SuperFerry hotline (02)528-7000 in Metro Manila, (034)435-4965 in Bacolod, (062)992-6114 in Zamboanga, or text SuperFerry SMS (0917)8892421.

'CROSSING BOARDERS FOR OTHERS'

The Parish of St. James the Great in Ayala Alabang will present 'Crossing Boarders for Others', a fashion presentation showcasing the national costumes of foreigners residing in the village. It will be highlighted by the Filipiniana collection of Jose Pitoy Moreno which was presented at the 2006 Philippine Independence Day celebrations in Washington D.C. This will be the first time that the international community in Ayala Alabang will join hands with the Filipino residents for worthwhile causes such as the Elsie Gaches Village, Marillac Hills, Tunasan City Jail, Ayala Alabang Hospice Foundation and some of the poorest parishes all over the Philippines. The show will be held at the Reception Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd, on Sunday, Nov. 26. For ticket inquiries call Marie or Bernie at the Copa office: 842-6369 or 842-5140 or Loie at 0917-3238014. Shown are the PR and publicity committee (from left, seated): Mimi Valerio, Baby Carandang, Bubut delos Santos, Loie Rodriguez, (standing): Joanne Matschuck, Chichi Lizot and Vivian Madrigal..

Security Bank promo raffles off dream condo

IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 55TH ANNIVERSARY, Security Bank Corp launches "Save and Win", a nationwide consumer raffle promotion where new and existing depositors get a chance to win a dream residential condominium unit at the posh Two Serendra in Bonifacio Global City. Other valuable prizes at stake are 55 high-tech lifestyle gadgets such as a Sony Plasma TV, Apple iBooks, Nokia N91 Cellphones, and Apple iPod Videos, and other fabulous prizes, ideal for the fast-paced urban lifestyle.

"Save and Win" raffle promo is open to individual or joint accountholders of any of these Security Bank deposit products: Peso Savings-Passbook, Peso Savings-ATM, Build Up Savings, Regular Peso Checking Account, CheckRight, CheckOne, All-in-One Checking Account and US Dollar Savings. The promo is ongoing until Jan. 31, 2007.

Every P5,000 or $100 of the qualified account's computed 5-month Average Daily Balance (ADB) from September 2006 to January 2007 is entitled to one system-generated raffle entry. Eligible accounts must reflect an increment of P100,000 or $2,000 in their full five-month ADB during the five-month promo period to qualify. Winners will be drawn in an electronic raffle under the supervision of the Department of Trade and Industry representatives on Feb. 15, 2007.

"Save and Win" is one of the many ways that Security Bank celebrates over half a century of banking excellence to show its appreciation and share its success with its loyal clients for their continuing trust and confidence. For the complete promo details and mechanics, log on to www.securitybank.com.ph or visit any of the 114 Security Bank branches nationwide.

GSK DONATES TO USAFFE

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) through its ValueHealth program recently donated various medicines to Usaffe Veterans' Dependents Foundation Inc in support of its medical mission that coincided with the celebration of its 11th year anniversary. The ValueHealth portfolio consists of antibiotics, medicines for asthma, hyperacidity and gout, among others. These quality medicines have now been made more accessible to more Filipinos through price reductions of up to 34 percent. Photo shows Tim Limgenco (right), GlaxoSmithKline's product manager for ValueHealth, handing over the donations to Usaffe representative Aries Nene.

The best kept secret in fat loss

AS THE COUNTRY'S FIRST NON-invasive slimming facility exclusively for men, Santre stresses the importance of health to men. Its unique combination of highly effective scientific methods using slimming equipment and Eastern massage techniques has given Santre a reputation that has turned its name into an inescapable buzz among those who have felt the need to not only look better, but lead better and healthier lives as well. Fat loss and inch loss for men have never been more effective, nor more accessible.

Institut Santre's signature treatment program, the OmniVital Therapy System, is a three-pronged program that first improves your metabolism, breaks down stubborn fat and tones the body.

As with everything, the clients' cooperation is the beginning to the success of the program. They are advised to come at least 3 times a week for the first two months, more if necessary. And while Santre does not guarantee overnight miracles, they do promise changes for the better if one does not skip appointments, stick to the program and truly prioritize fat loss and weight loss goals.

In today's society, vanity is just an overused word. It's now acceptable for men to care about the way they look. Now is the time to get back to your ideal shape and let the compliments that you receive speak for themselves.

To learn more about the treatments offered at Institut Santre, call 759-5599. You may also check their website at www.institutsantre.com.

BITS Clips

The great Podium sale

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN WHEN ALL roads lead to The Podium. Enjoy great bargains and great finds at the mall's 3 Day Sale on Sept. 29 to Oct. 1. Shoppers can enjoy up to 70 percent discount in The Podium's specialty stores, restaurants and service outlets. There are great fashion finds: Sisley's 60 percent off on sweaters, tees and pants; Arrow's 50 percent discount on sports and classic t-shirts; and up to 50 percent off on trendy boutiques like BYSI, Topman, Celio, Kamiseta, Bayo and Bench. Sports buffs shouldn't miss the up to 50 percent discounts at Nike and Speedo. Its also a good time to shop for shoes: Dexter offers up to 80 percent off, Lacoste up to 50 percent off and GH Bass up to 30 percent. If you're shopping for kids, check out the bargains at TK by Toy Kingdom and Baby & Co. while shopping, try out the offerings of the mall's specialty restaurants and food outlets or relax at The Spa and the Belo Medical clinic. Better still enjoy not only the sights, but also the sounds of the mall with special performances by Akafellas on Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. and sultry siren Vernie Varga on Sept. 30. Young artists take centerstage on the last day, Sunday, Oct. 1. New age pianist Angelo Ortiz together with World Champion on the Performing Arts Rizza Navales, Joaquin Dexter and Jennifer Bautista at 2:30 p.m. and balladeer Christian Bautista at 6 p.m.

Seafood Club launches 'Viva Singapura'

THIS MONTH, THE SEAFOOD CLUB BY RED Crab in cooperation with Uni Orient Travel Inc. Located at I-Care Bldg., 167 Legazpi St., corner Dela Rosa St., Legaspi Village Makati will launch "Viva Singapura" promo in which a lucky patron will win two round-trip tickets to Singapore. Elaine M. Botabara, operations director of Seafood Club Restaurant, said that only buffet patrons are qualified to join the contest. Buffet is served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The promo will run from Sept. 11 to Oct. 30. Raffle draw will be held on Nov. 4 There will also be 10 winners of consolation prizes, who will each receive P1,000 worth of gift certificates. This month, with the theme called "Viva Singapura," the Seafood Club will offer mouthwatering dishes from Singapore. Among the delicious dishes include Popiah, Mixed Seafood Sambal, fish Head Curry, Mee Goreng, Chicken Satay, Singaporean Chili Crab, Butter Ginger Crab, Crab Singapura, Tandoori Baked Fish, Grilled Fish with honey butter sauce, Tomato glazed Roast Pork, Prawns with mangoes and cucumber veggies, appetizers, salad, soup and desserts. For details, call 757-4129, Uni-Orient 818-9585.

Stellans, ahoy!

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE IN CUBAO, QUEZON City is gearing up for its Grand Alumnae Homecoming 2006 on Saturday, Oct. 7 at the SMC Covered Court. Host this year is the Class of 1981. The celebration dubbed "Stars '81: Absolutely Fab @ 25", promises to be a fun-filled day and night of grooving' and grindin' to the funky music of the 70s and 80s. Batch '81 will also be turning over to SMC its contribution to the education of future Stellans. Registration starts at 3 p.m. with 150 early birds getting a valuable keepsake that's uniquely Stella Maris, while everyone gets a chance to bring home delightful door prizes. Registration fee is P200 in support of the SMC Alumnae Association Inc's scholarship project. For details contact Angeli Abundo-Telan at angietelan@yahoo.com or Tina Lejano Velasco at 671-1222.

Unilab's Bright promo

JOIN UNILAB'S ENERVON BRIGHT IN CULMINATING its nationwide promo, "Enervon Bright, Bright Future Quest," at Market! Market! Activity Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, on Oct. 1, Sunday. Kids and kids-at-heart can participate in the fun and games starting at 10 a.m. Visit the different booths like Teacher's Corner, Play Lane, Cooks Avenue, and more. Meet the chosen Enervon Bright Ambassadors and celebrity guests like Sharlene San Pedro of Calla Lily and Mikylla of Goin' Bulilit. Spongebob Squarepants, Blue's Clues, and other mascots will also make special appearances. Loot bags will be given free to all participants. Enervon Bright, Bright Future Quest is brought to you by Unilab's Enervon Bright in cooperation with Sanyo, Myra 400E, Ceelin, Growee, Fisher Price, Tele Story, Toy Town, Adarna House, Dunkin Donuts, pH Care, Decolgen, Enervon Plus, Nutroplex, Oishi, Dave's Funhouse, and Kevin's Toys and Library.

Pana MBA Series

THE PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL Advertisers (Pana) presents "Creativity Unleashed", the 2006 Pana Marketing and Brand Advancement (MBA) Series from Oct. 5 to 6 at the Rockwell Tent in Makati City. This is the best opportunity for advertising and marketing industry practitioners, entrepreneurs, and students to broaden their know-how, further sharpen their skills, and create bigger businesses. The 2006 MBA Series tackles creative marketing successes as explained by those who realized and achieved them. There are also exciting segments and raffle prizes awaiting MBA attendees. Don't be left out of the loop: arm yourself with the freshest and most creative insights from today's brightest minds. Call the PANA Secretariat at 894-0474 to 75 or 894-0012 to 13, fax at 894-0472/1515, email at email@pana.com.ph, or log on at www.pana.com.ph.

Serving the Filipino youth

IN DECIDING WHAT COURSE TO TAKE IN college, incoming students would usually contemplate on venturing in a course that could give them long-term benefits like better employment opportunities. Most educational institutions realize that there is a need to provide education that can equip students with the knowledge and skills that are needed to become both locally and globally competitive. Jose Rizal University, the university that cares about good education, takes pride that it has been zealous in providing good education in a variety of fields. Aside from being associated as one of the universities known for traditional courses like commerce and accounting, it strives to develop new courses that could address the current demands of different industries, particularly technology related courses. Recently, the university opened its B.S. Nursing course with the aim of meeting the high demand of education in the industry vis-à-vis the growing demand for health industry workers. JRU has also opened a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management where demands for graduates are also at peak. For more information on JRU, log on to www.jru.edu.ph.

Mundipharma launches painting contest

PHARMACEUTICAL FIRM, MUNDIPHARMA Distribution GmbH (Philippine branch), has launched a painting contest on the subject of pain, which it stated remains under reported, under diagnosed and under treated. The company announced that the contest entitled "Painting of All Pain Things" is aimed at increasing consciousness on pain which deserves attention, better treatment and optimal care. Mundipharma encourages painting virtuosos to join the competition and submit their entries by Oct. 4, to its offices at The Taipan Place, F. Ortigas Jr. Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Selected entries will be exhibited during the first international conference of the Association of South East Asian Pain Societies (Aseaps), which will be held in the Philippines in November 2006 at the Philippine Plaza Hotel. The winners will be announced at this meeting.

Go extreme at BK

AT BURGER KING, THEY TOOK PAINS TO FIND out - what do kings and queens want when they say extra cheesy? If you want to find out too for yourself the answer to this age-old question and the feeling of being treated like royalty, head out now to a Burger King restaurant nearest you and issue an order for the Extreme Cheese Whopper and Extreme Cheese Whopper Jr. Taste the creamy cheesy goodness of thick melts-in-your-mouth cheddar sauce and slices of American cheese, complimenting your fire-grilled burger patties. These offers are available at an all-time low price of P69 for the Extreme Cheese Whopper Jr. and P119 for the Extreme Cheese Whopper. Ask their friendly BK smile member about the Extreme Cheese Value Meals too. This offer is valid for dine-in, drive-thru and take out. For other fire-grilled burgers, check out the 30 Burger king restaurants.

PSQ holds quality confab

THE PHILIPPINE SOCIETY FOR QUALITY (PSQ) will hold the 18th National Quality Forum (NQF) on Oct. 9 and 10, at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. The NQF is the annual gathering of quality professionals, practitioners, and advocates in the country. The 18th NQF theme's is "Consistency Amidst Change." Change has spared no one. Since Alvin Toffler popularized the acceleration of change and called it future shock, companies and individuals have focused on the need to confront change constructively even at its most sudden and blinding surges. Angie Fraginal, president of PSQ, points to the rise of performance standards and systems in the arena of quality management as one effective response to the challenges posed by unwieldy change. The Philippine Society for Quality, founded in 1969, is the Administrator of the Philippine Quality Award for the private sector and the sponsor of the Juran Medal for senior executives who excel in the promotion and application of quality management.

Buying a PC, a click away

GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN YOU NEED TO travel far and wide to find the best deals in computers. Instant access to a huge range of high quality IT products and services offered at discounted prices is now just a mouse click away, thanks to QubePC Technologies Marketing and its innovative brainchild, www.buyqube.com. Choose from the extensive line of IT products included in their up-to-date XPC, Home or Office, Business, Home Theatre, and Gaming Packages. Or you can even customize your very own. Place and confirm your order, deposit the payment in the nearest bank and in a matter of hours, you will already receive your high quality goods. Now, that's customer satisfaction guaranteed! For all your computer needs, simply visit www.buyqube.com, your virtual discount computer outlet. For queries and more information, you can contact QubePC at (02) 410-QUBE (7823) or 0922-410-6849 to 50, or visit QubePC in Gilmore, Quezon City.

Palms Int'l seminar

PALMS INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SERvices, one of the forerunners in Australian Immigration Services and awarded as "2005 Most Outstanding Australian Immigration Services in the Philippines" will hold its quarterly seminar and consultations on Oct. 22 and 29 at the Makati Stock Exchange, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Palms also conducts daily individual consultations and group sessions on Saturdays. Australia needs more migrant, with its current low birth rate of 1.8 baby per woman, Australia has to look somewhere to ease the dual problems of a graying population and a desperate shortage of workers in many key industries. Palms International Migration Services is located at U-226, Cityland Condo 8, #98 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. For more information, call 813-3971/813-4194/893-8035 or e-mail auscan@skyinet.net or visit www.prtimmigration.com.

Security Trade Exhibit

IN CONNECTION WITH THE 26TH ANNIVERsary celebration of the Civil Security Group, Philippine National Police, a security trade exhibit dubbed "CSG @ 26 (A Security Trade Exhibit), is slated on Oct. 2, 3 and 4, at the Camp Crame Multi-Purpose Center. Avail of great discounts on security gadgets, firearms and ammunitions, police and bodyguard uniforms, office supplies, appliances and more. Watch the fashion shows, variety shows, fireworks display. And win fabulous prizes in our daily raffle draws. For more information contact Leah Fernandez or Rommel P. Fernandez at (02)715-2838, 0915-9421299, 0917-4515390.

MADZitawanan at CCP

THE PHILIPPINE MADRIGAL SINGERS, ASIA'S most awarded and acclaimed choir having consistently won all the first prizes in the world's most prestigious choral competitions, will be featured in a special concert dubbed "MADZitawanan" on Oct. 1 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Main Theater at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. The Madz, fresh from their latest victory in June by winning the much-coveted Grand Prix for best overall performance in the Florilege Vocal de Tours international tilt in France, promises to deliver another uplifting and memorable performance with a repertoire of humor-filled numbers. Proceeds of the concert will go to the special ministries and projects of the Ellinwood-Malate Church in celebration of its 99th founding anniversary. Tickets are available at the CCP box office, the Ellinwood-Malate Church (523-2884, 523-6564 or 0918-9372055) and Ticket World outlets (891-9999).

Consumer Welfare Month

AS LEAD AGENCY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF this year's Consumer Welfare Month (CWM), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will hold the CWM Opening Ceremony on Oct. 4, 9 a.m. at the Philippine Trade Training Center Hall, Pasay City. Vice President Noli de Castro will grace the occasion as Guest of Honor and Keynote Speaker, along with other distinguished guests. With the theme "Enforcing Consumer Rights Towards a Progressive Philippines", this year's celebration of CWM aims to educate the general public on their rights and responsibilities as consumers and to instill quality-consciousness among the public in their choice of products and services. It seeks to urge the business sector to do business responsibly by offering quality products and services and to encourage the civil society to take part in current consumer protection initiatives. The CWM 2006 Closing Ceremony will take place on Oct. 31 at the CWTRG Hall of the DTI Main Office in Makati City.

AHS Batch '72 Jubilee

CALLING ALL GRADUATES OF ARAULLO High School Class '72 to attend the grand alumni homecoming on Feb. 17, 2007. For details, contact Roberto Atutubo - 0917-8816103, Dan Mangaldan - 0917-7913755, Reynaldo Bautista - 0918-9299239, Tessie Calisay - 0927-7948772, Teresita Minon - 0920-9261100, Escolastica Baruelo - 0918-2080288, Paraluman Montano - 0921-2263484, Aurora Espina - 0917-8916929, or e-mail to araullo_class_72@yahoogroups.com.

Visit Canyon Ranch

CONSTRUCTION ON THE COUNTRY'S FIRST Wi-Fi integrated, California ranch style community is right on schedule. Developed by Century Properties, the country's largest privately owned real estate developer, Canyon Ranch has established its position as the fastest selling development in the South, after its launch last January 2005. 80 percent of Canyon Ranch is already sold out. Available units include Berkeley, Calistoga, Delano, Fremont, Malibu and Napa. Meanwhile model units located at the Street of Dreams are also up for sale. On site updates include home construction and installation of power, water and other utilities at Phase 1. All roads at Canyon Ranch will be completed by Nov. 15. Indeed the best by far is actually quite near. For more information, log on to www.canyonranch.com.ph or call 818-9025, 893-7050 and 0915-7002000.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
Roxas Boulevard Corner Vito Cruz Street
Manila 1004

DEPARTMENT ORDER 27-06

TO : **ALL INSURANCE COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES**

SUBJECT : **CAPITALIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFE, NON-LIFE, AND REINSURANCE COMPANIES**

WHEREAS, stable and reliable insurance and insurance systems, greatly influence the country's economic development by impacting the level of capital formation and allocation and engendering consumer confidence in the systemic integrity of the financial system;

WHEREAS, capitalization is one of the most vital financial rating factors for insurance companies: The Philippines has one of the lowest capital requirements among Asian countries which has hampered the ability of local insurance companies to compete at least with ASEAN and other regional players in this period of economic globalization;

WHEREAS, current minimum capitalization requirements are inadequate relative to:

a. The needed business infrastructures and quality management team that will ensure better service to all stakeholders and expand its market penetration; and
b. The adequate allowance for increased business volatility and for mitigating market imperfections;

WHEREAS, capital bases must be rebuilt because low capitalization levels have resulted in low retention ratios and heavy reliance on reinsurance;

WHEREAS, the solvency positions of insurers must be secured and stable capital bases reduce insolvency risk and afford better protection for the insuring public;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me by the provision of Section 188 of the Insurance Code, as amended, the following are hereby promulgated:

I. Any licensed wholly Filipino-owned domestic **life or non-life insurance company** existing, operating, or otherwise doing business in the Philippines, licensed as of the effectivity of this Order, must possess of capitalization hereunder specified in accordance with the following schedule of compliance:

	Minimum Statutory Net Worth	Minimum Paid-Up Capital	By (Compliance Date)
A.	Php 100 Million	Php 50 Million	December 31, 2006
B.	Php 150 Million	Php 75 Million	December 31, 2007
C.	Php 200 Million	Php 100 Million	December 31, 2008
D.	Php 250 Million	Php 125 Million	December 31, 2009
E.	Php 350 Million	Php 175 Million	December 31, 2010
F.	Php 500 Million	Php 250 Million	December 31, 2011

II. Any **life or non-life insurance company** existing, operating, or otherwise doing business in the Philippines with *forty percent (40%) or less* foreign equity must possess of capitalization hereunder specified in accordance with the following schedule of compliance:

	Minimum Statutory Net Worth	Minimum Paid-Up Capital	By (Compliance Date)
A.	Php 200 Million	Php 100 Million	December 31, 2006
B.	Php 300 Million	Php 150 Million	December 31, 2007
C.	Php 400 Million	Php 200 Million	December 31, 2008
D.	Php 500 Million	Php 250 Million	December 31, 2009
E.	Php 600 Million	Php 300 Million	December 31, 2010

III. Any **life or non-life insurance company** existing, operating, or otherwise doing business in the Philippines with more than *forty percent (40%) but less than sixty percent (60%)* foreign equity must possess of capitalization hereunder specified in accordance with the following schedule of compliance:

	Minimum Statutory Net Worth	Minimum Paid-Up Capital	By (Compliance Date)
A.	Php 300 Million	Php 150 Million	December 31, 2006
B.	Php 400 Million	Php 200 Million	December 31, 2007
C.	Php 500 Million	Php 250 Million	December 31, 2008
D.	Php 600 Million	Php 300 Million	December 31, 2009
E.	Php 700 Million	Php 350 Million	December 31, 2010

IV. Any **life or non-life insurance company** existing, operating, or otherwise doing business in the Philippines with *at least sixty percent (60%)* foreign equity must possess of capitalization hereunder specified in accordance with the following schedule of compliance:

	Minimum Statutory Net Worth	Minimum Paid-Up Capital	By (Compliance Date)
A.	Php 500 Million	Php 250 Million	December 31, 2006
B.	Php 600 Million	Php 300 Million	December 31, 2007
C.	Php 700 Million	Php 350 Million	December 31, 2008
D.	Php 850 Million	Php 425 Million	December 31, 2009
E.	Php 1.00Billion	Php 500 Million	December 31, 2010

V. Any **reinsurance company** existing, operating, or otherwise doing business in the Philippines must possess of capitalization hereunder specified in accordance with the following schedule of compliance:

	Minimum Statutory Net Worth	Minimum Paid-Up Capital	By (Compliance Date)
A.	Php 750 Million	Php 375 Million	December 31, 2006
B.	Php 1.00 Billion	Php 500 Million	December 31, 2007
C.	Php 1.25 Billion	Php 625 Million	December 31, 2008
D.	Php 1.50 Billion	Php 750 Million	December 31, 2009
E.	Php 2.00 Billion	Php 1.00 Billion	December 31, 2010

VI. The statutory net worth of life, non-life, and reinsurance companies shall include the company's paid-up capital, capital in excess of par value, contingency surplus, retained earnings, and revaluation increments as may be approved by the Insurance Commissioner.

VII. All existing life, non-life, or reinsurance companies must submit a detailed Capital Build-up Program for the Years 2006 to 2010, accompanied by all resolution/s of the board of directors to this effect and attested to by the president, chief executive officer, and chief financial officer, not later than October 31, 2006.

VIII. No life, non-life, or reinsurance company may be rehabilitated and authorized to transact business anew unless in full compliance with, or possessed of the minimum capitalization levels required under, Department Order 1-2006.

IX. The requirements under this Order shall be without prejudice to other requirements to be imposed under the Risk-Based Capital method to be adopted by the Insurance Commission, and the statutory Margin of Solvency requirement under Section 194 of the Insurance Code.

The Insurance Commission may issue such other guidelines as it deems necessary to enforce the provisions of this Order. Non-compliance with this Order and additional guidelines shall result to the revocation of the life, non-life, or reinsurance company's license to do business or certificate of authority.

This supersedes provisions of Department Order Nos. 116-93; 100-94; 49-96; and 31-01 as are inconsistent with the provisions of this Department Order.

This Department Order shall take effect immediately.

Signed on September 1, 2006.

MARGARITO B. TEVES
Secretary
Department of Finance

Recommending approval:

EVANGELINE CRISOSTOMO-ESCOBILLO
Insurance Commissioner

0003978

(PDI-Sept. 21 & 28, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila
EN BANC

IN THE MATTER OF THE FAILURE OF PARTY-LIST ORGANIZATIONS TO COMPLY WITH SECTION 6 (8) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7941
x-------------------------x

Chairman Benjamin S. Abalos, Sr.
Commissioner Resurreccion Z. Borra
Commissioner Florentino A. Tuason, Jr.
Commissioner Romeo A. Brawner
Commissioner Rene V. Sarmiento
Commissioner Nicodemo T. Ferrer

Promulgated: 25 September 2006

RESOLUTION NO. 7718

WHEREAS, there are national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations currently registered under the party-list system;

WHEREAS, Section 6, item no. 8 of Republic Act No. 7941, otherwise known as the Party-List System Act, provides:

> **"Section 6. Removal and/or Cancellation of Registration.** – The COMELEC may *motu proprio* or upon verified complaint of any interested party, remove or cancel, after due notice and hearing, the registration of any national, regional or sectoral party, organization or coalition, on any of the following grounds:
>
> xxx xxx xxx
>
> **(8) It fails to participate in the last two (2) preceding elections or fails to obtain at least two per centum (2%) of the votes cast under the party-list system in the two (2) preceding elections for the constituency in which it has registered."**

WHEREAS, Comelec Resolution No. 2847 promulgated 25 June 1996 entitled: "In Re: Rules and Regulations Governing the Election of the Party-List Representatives through the Party-List System", which states:

> **"Sec. 6. Removal and/or Cancellation of Registration.** – The Commission may motu proprio or upon verified complaint of any interested party, remove or cancel, after due notice and hearing, the registration of any national, regional or sectoral party, organization or coalition on any of the following grounds:
>
> xxx xxx xxx
>
> **(8) It fails to participate in the last two (2) preceding elections or fails to obtain at least two per centum (2%) of the votes cast under the party-list system in the two (2) preceding elections for the constituency in which it has registered."**

WHEREAS, many of these registered national, regional or sectoral parties or organizations failed to comply with the foregoing provisions;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers granted by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7941 and other election laws, the Commission hereby promulgates this resolution.

Section 1. **Requirement for party-list to report its participation in the election.** – Every national, regional and sectoral party or organization or coalitions thereof registered prior to the May 14, 2001 elections is hereby required to inform the Commission, in writing, within ten (10) days from notice as to whether or not it had manifested to participate in the party-list elections in the May 14, 2001 and May 10, 2004 Election and obtained at least two (2) percent of the votes cast under the party-list system. Said written information should be filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission not later than October 2, 2006 copy furnished the Law Department.

Format of the written information is hereto attached as Annex "A".

Section 2. **Effect of failure to comply.** – Failure to comply with the preceding requirement despite due notice shall constitute prima facie evidence of failure to participate in the May 14, 2001 and May 10, 2004 Elections and failure to obtain at least two per centum of the total votes cast for the party-list system and shall be a cause for the cancellation of its registration.

Section 3. **Notice and hearing of cancellation.** – Upon confirmation or proof of the failure of national, regional or sectoral parties or organizations or coalitions thereof to participate in the party-list system elections and to obtain two (2) percent of the votes cast under the party-list system during the May 14, 2001 and May 10, 2004 elections, the same shall be set for hearing by the Commission en banc, wherein the party-list party or organization concerned shall be given the opportunity to show cause why its registration should not be cancelled on the basis of such proof or confirmation. Thereafter, the Commission shall decide the matter.

Section 4. **Duty of the Election Records and Statistics Department.** – The Election Records and Statistics Department shall submit to the Law Department and the Clerk of the Commission the list of party-list party, organization or coalitions thereof who participated in the elections with their corresponding number of votes with percentage during the last two (2) preceding elections.

Section 5. **Effectivity.** – This resolution shall effect seven (7) days after its publication in two newspapers of general circulation.

Section 6. **Dissemination.** – The Education and Information Department shall cause the widest publication hereof in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

The Clerk of the Commission shall furnish copies of this Resolution to the national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations registered under the party-list.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

cc: Chairman
All Commissioners
The Executive Director
Education and Information Department
Clerk of the Commission
Election Records and Statistics Department
Law Department

(PDI–September 28, 2006)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE is given that **Mr. RENATO R. DE VERA**, whose picture appears above is no longer connected with

1. **EPOCH CORPORATION**
2. **NTT Fellow Company, Inc.**
3. **EPOCH TROPICAL FRUITS CORPORATION**

effective **September 15, 2006.**

Any transactions and dealings entered into by said person for and on behalf of the above-named Corporations/Companies on or after the aforementioned date will not be honored and accepted by the Corporations/Companies.

The Managements
EPOCH CORPORATION
NTT Fellow Company, Inc.
EPOCH TROPICAL FRUITS, CORP.

(PDI–Sept. 28, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
APAC CUSTOMER SERVICES, INC. 4/F, Plaza C, Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa	Pamela Sue Howard	Manager, Operations
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F, Robinsons Summit Ctr., 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Masame Mizuno	Japanese Client Support
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F, Robinsons Summit Ctr., 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Erick Salvador Carcamo Servellon	Operations Director
JINSOL CORP. 45 Kalayaan Ave, Delicia Bldg., Diliman, Quezon City	Sung Yeop Kim	Personnel Manager
JP MORGAN CHASE BANK, N.A. 31/F, Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Vineet Rohatgi	Site Training Manager
INGASCO INCORPORATED 8/F, West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Rd., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Masahiro Shindo	Vice President for Technical Services and Engineering Division
GUO WEN TRADING CO. LTD. 560 Q. Paredes St., Brgy 291, Zone 027 Binondo, Manila	Jing Liu	Assistant General Manager
BAYSIDE EURO SHOPPER'S WORLD CORP. Damon Bldg., Financial Ctr. D. Macapagal Ave., Pasay City	In Kwon An	Assistant Marketing Consultant
NATIONAL RELIEF CHARITIES U-2504 Prestige Tower, Emerald Ave. Ortigas Ctr., San Antonio, Pasig City	Robert William Peterson	General Manager
ENHANCE VISA SERVICES, INC. U-2015 Strata 100 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd. Ortigas Ctr., San Antonio, Pasig City	Paul Ernest Dumont	Senior Advisor
HENKEL ASIA-PASIFIC LTD. 29/F, LKG Twr, 6801 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Rikako Shige	Treasury Specialist and Japanese Speaker
BAXTER HEALTHCARE PHILS., INC. 19/F, Wynsum Corp. Plaza, Plaza Emerald Ortigas Ctr., San Antonio, Pasig City	Nikhil Kabra	Finance Manager
SHARP (PHILS.) CORPORATION Km. 23, West Service Rd., South Superhighway, Alabang, Muntinlupa	Tomoki Ueshima	Treasurer for Customer Sales Division
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F, Robinsons Summit Ctr., 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chadilda Patchaisomboon	Thai Client Support
FRASER SERVICED RESIDENCES PHILIPPINES, INC. Forbes Twr., Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Winan Kwunsri	General Manager
NORASIAN ENERGY PHILIPPINES, INC. 4/F, F&M Lopez Bldg. II, 109 C. Palanca St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Kristoffer Kenneth Richmond Fellowes	Chief Financial Officer
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F, Robinsons Summit Ctr., 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Changsoon Lee	Korean Client Support
EDSA SHANGRI-LA HOTEL & RESORT, INC. #1 Gardenway, Ortigas Ctr., Mandaluyong City	Anthony George Dawson	Executive Chef

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Sept. 28, 2006)

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

FOR PASSENGER VESSEL
(POEA LICENSE: 170-SB-012904-R)

FOR GALLEY DEPARTMENT
SOUS CHEF
CHEF TOURNANT
1ST COOK (Hot & Cold)
2ND COOK (Hot & Cold)
BUFFET DECORATOR
PASTRY CHEF
ASST. PASTRYMAN
HEAD BUTCHER
KITCHEN STEWARD
ASST. KITCHEN STEWARD
BAKER
ASST. BAKER

FOR F & B STORE DEPARTMENT
STORES MANAGER
ASST. STORES MANAGER
STOREKEEPER
SNACK STEWARD
BAR WAITER/ESS
BARTENDER/ESS
WAITER/ESS

FOR HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT

CABIN STEWARD/ESS
LAUNDRYMASTER
LAUNDRYMAN
TAILOR/LINENKEEPER

QUALIFICATIONS:
PASSENGER VESSEL EXPERIENCE, AT LEAST 3 YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION OR 3 TO 5 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN 5 STAR HOTEL.
KNOW HOW TO SPEAK SPANISH (OPTIONAL IN SOME F&B POSITIONS)

APPLY IN PERSON AT:

BP INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CORPORATION
3RD FLOOR AVENA & SONS BLDG. 2284 ESPANA SAMPALOC, MANILA
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is urgently in need of an
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Personally handcarry your letter of application and resumé w/ 2" x 2" picture to the Admin. Office at Valero Plaza, 124 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City, not later than Fri., Sept. 29, 2006.

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Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court through the Committee on Bids invites: a) Dealers/Distributors for Lots 1 to 4; and b) Manufacturers for Lot 5 to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Name of Project	Approved Budget	Source of Funding
LOT 1		
Basic Office Supplies (4th Quarter 2006)	P2,040,066.99	General Appropriations Act – CY 2006
LOT 2		
Paper Supplies (4th Quarter 2006)	P 5,188,376.60	General Appropriations Act – CY 2006
LOT 3		
Printing Supplies (2nd Semester 2006)	P 1,977,740.00	General Appropriations Act – CY 2006
LOT 4		
21 – units Senior Executive Chair (Fabric) 62 – units Junior Excutive Chair (Fabric) 461 – units Clerical Chair with armrest (Fabric) 23 – units Visitor Chair, 4 legged base w/out armrest (Fabric)	P 1,359,320.35	Judiciary Development Fund
LOT 5		
521 – units Filing Cabinet 176 – units Storage Cabinet 80 – units Safe File Cabinet	P 6,791,064.00	Judiciary Development Fund

PERIOD OF DELIVERY:
Thirty (30) calendar days after issuance of Purchase Order

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

I. **PRE-BID CONFERENCE**

The Pre-bid conference will be held on the following schedule:

Project	Date and Time	Venue
Lot 1, 2 & 3	October 5, 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.	Session, 3rd Floor, Old Bldg., Taft Ave., Mla.
Lot 4	October 11, 2006, Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.	Session, 3rd Floor, Old Bldg., Taft Ave., Mla.
Lot 5	November 8, 2006, Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.	Session, 3rd Floor, Old Bldg., Taft Ave., Mla.

II. **SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS**

The eligibility requirements of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative, and the bids will be opened, thereafter, in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, to be held on the following schedule:

Project	Date and Time	Venue
Lot 1, 2 & 3	October 19, 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.	Session, 3rd Floor, Old Bldg., Taft Ave., Mla.
Lot 4	October 25, 2006, Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.	Session, 3rd Floor, Old Bldg., Taft Ave., Mla.
Lot 5	November 22, 2006, Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.	Session, 3rd Floor, Old Bldg., Taft Ave., Mla.

Prospective bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or its Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Interested bidders may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from the **Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, 3rd Floor Annex Building, Supreme Court**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) for Lot 1, Lot 3 and Lot 4**, and **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)** for **Lot 2 and Lot 5**, prior to the conduct of pre-bid conference. For additional information, the bidders may contact the **Secretary, Atty. Ennar R.C. Cabanilla at telefax no. 5251270 or Ms. Norma C. Josue at tel. no. 5266419.**

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to: 1) reject any or all bids, 2) waive any defects or informalities therein, 3) or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be most advantageous and beneficial to the government.

September 20, 2006.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman

(PDI–Sept. 21 & 28, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
PRESIDENTIAL BROADCAST STAFF-RTVM
Malacañang, Manila

SUPPLEMENTAL / BID BULLETIN
BB # 2

In connection with the previously advertised Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Procurement of Various Broadcast Equipment dated September 11 and 18, 2006, the Presidential Broadcast Staff-RTVM is issuing this supplemental bulletin for some important modification in the bidding documents earlier provided to prospective bidders:

	Previous	Amendment
Technical specification	3 sets hanging camera w/ complete accessories	4 sets hanging camera w/ complete accessories
Approved Budget for Contract	P 40,036,976.27	P 44,841,413.42
Completion / Delivery Schedule	on or before Oct. 30, 2006	November 9, 2006
Schedule of activities: • Last Day of Submission and Opening of Bids	October 3, 2006 10:00 am PBS-RTVM	October 6, 2006 10:00 am PBS-RTVM

The modified bidding documents are now available at the PBS-RTVM office.

Thank you for your attention.

(Sgd.) **MELBA B. ALIGAEN**
BAC Chairman
September 27, 2006

(PDI--Sept. 28, 2006)

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

The Office of the Representative of the United Nations Population Fund, Manila is seeking applications from competent candidates to fill the post of

LAN MANAGER

Under the overall direction and supervision of the UNFPA Representative, the LAN Manager shall be at the forefront of developing and implementing a comprehensive information technology strategy encompassing all facets of office automation in the organization, in pursuit of UNFPA thrusts and objectives.

More specifically, as part of the Country Office Team, the LAN Manager:

- Ensures compliance with the corporate information management and technology standards, guidelines and procedures for the Country Office
- Manage the LAN system performance monitoring, anticipates communications and networking problems and oversee the implementation of preventive measures
- Respond to user needs and queries regarding network access and provide staffs in assisting users in the use of network resources
- Investigates user problems, identifies their source, determines possible solutions, tests and implements solutions and also installs enhancements and operating procedures that optimize network availability
- Ensures timely notification of expected degradations in performance and user activities to minimize their effects and informs users of current services and planned changes affecting LAN operations
- Propose to the Representative tools and methods of improving effectiveness in using information technology
- Designs and implements backup and recovery procedures; maintains adequate backup/restoration mechanism and a disaster recovery plan
- Prepares and maintains network documentations and network diagram for disaster preparedness
- Audits assigned applications to ensure disaster recovery plan is properly incorporated and functioning, oversee the execution of disaster recovery procedures should data corruption or system failures occur
- Maintains LAN security in terms of physical and network access; investigates perceived unauthorized attempts to access the network, identifies the source of attempted access, and reports findings to the Representative for proper resolution; assesses effectiveness of security systems and recommends steps to eliminate deficiencies
- Trains users on LAN operations, including network and physical security, and provides technical resource support as needed; may assign and maintain user security/access codes
- Clears technical specifications of IT hardware and software with the Headquarters
- Prepares technical bid specifications, recommends appropriate equipment and participates in the ordering of IT equipment
- Oversee the installation and maintenance of hardware and software products and the configuration of personal computer and network equipment according to organization-wide system standards
- Administer the troubleshooting of network problems and to supervise the monitoring of File server traffic, usage and performance; Network security access and space usage
- Under the Common Services scheme on I.T., ensure smooth operations of the UNFPA network and of other UN agencies
- Collaborate with each Agency's focal person in the installation of commercial and in-house developed software and related upgrades and identify installation options specific to the Country Office's and each Agency's needs

Functional Requirements:

- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science/Computer Engineering or equivalent
- At least four (4) years of relevant demonstrated professional experience in the IT industry
- Technical knowledge and hands-on experience in installing, troubleshooting, and administration of the following Operating Systems: MS Windows 2003 Server, MS Exchange 2003 Server, MS Web Server 2003, Linux and Windows XP Professional. Knowledge of UNIX is desirable
- Working knowledge on the following hardware: HP Proliant servers, HP Switches, CISCO ASA (Adaptive Security Appliance) firewall, CISCO Aironet wireless and IBM TotalStorage tape drive backup
- Working knowledge on the following software: Active Directory, Microsoft IIS 6.0, Symantec Backup Exec 10, TrendMicro ScanMail for Exchange, GFI Mail Essentials for Exchange, GFI Mail Security for Exchange, Microsoft Frontpage, Symantec Antivirus Corporate Edition, CorelDraw, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Indesign, Adobe Pagemaker, Microsoft Visio and Microsoft Office 2003 suite
- Experienced in doing actual hands-on installation and configuration of various software, hardware and network systems
- Technical expertise on LAN Administration, solving hardware, software and network-related problems

Core and Functional Competencies:

Demonstrates honesty, truthfulness and probity in all matters affecting work; Places the interest of the organization above his/her own; shows willingness to work without bias with all persons regardless of gender, nationality, religion or culture; seeks new challenges and additional special assignments; seeks and accepts guidance and feedback on own performance, and acts to continuously improve; integrates into the work unit, taking responsibility for own contribution to achieving team results; conceptual innovation in the provision of technical expertise;

Applicants are requested to send application letter indicating post title together with completed UN Personal History Form (P11), available in www.unfpa.org/about/employment/documents/p-11.doc to The Country Representative, United Nations Population Fund, 30th Floor, Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, 6879 Ayala Avenue, 1229 Makati City, Philippines or through email: jtraquina@unfpa.org.ph. All questions related to the announcement must be sent to Mr. Roberto P. Manongdo of UNFPA Manila by email rmanongdo@unfpa.org.ph.

We will only be able to respond to those applicants in whom UNFPA has a further interest. Women and nationals from developing countries are encouraged to apply. UNFPA is an equal opportunity employer and reserves the right to appoint at the indicated or lower level and prior to the closing date.

Salary: Negotiable, based on experience and qualifications.

Deadline for submission of applications: 04 October 2006

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory

On the 3rd Death Anniversary of

Josefa dela Rama Alunan

September 29, 2006

Holy Masses will be offered in her memory on September 29, 2006 at the following churches:

Santuario De San Jose *Greenhills, San Juan, M.M*	7:15 a.m
San Miguel Pro-Cathedral *Gen. Solano, San Miguel, Manila*	7:00 a.m
Our Lady of Sorrow Parish *F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City*	7:00 a.m
Don Bosco Makati *Pasay Road, City of Makati*	6:00 p.m
Saint Andrew Parish *Bel-Air, City of Makati*	6:00 p.m.
Santuario de San Antonio *Forbes Park, City of Makati*	6:00 p.m.
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Church *Magallanes Village, City of Makati*	6:00 p.m.
St. Sebastian Cathedral *Bacolod City*	7:00 a.m.
Sacred Heart Shrine *Bacolod City*	6:00 a.m.
San Antonio Parish *Bacolod City*	7:00 a.m.
Mary Queen of Peace *Bacolod City*	5:30 p.m.
Oratory of St. Nicolas of Tolentine *Bacolod City*	6:00 p.m.

Her family request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

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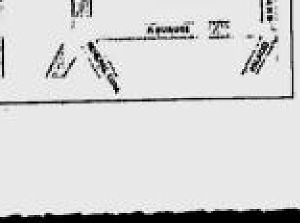

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TEL. NO.: 527-3342 / 522-4406
Contact Persons:
Babes, Randy & Grig

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

SOCORRO ISABELITA BILLEDO NARAJA

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on September 17, 2006

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Our dearly beloved

CARMEN "Lola Mameng" HERNANDEZ VILLENA

(January 28, 1914 – September 25, 2006)

Peacefully joined her Creator on September 25, 2006 at the age of 92.

Her loving children, **Milagros & Honorato**(†), **Ma. Luisa & Nestor, Wilfredo & Nenita**; grandchildren and all relatives request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the family residence in Canalate, Malolos, Bulacan.

Interment will be on September 30, 2006 at the Malolos Catholic Cemetery after the 1:30 PM Mass at the Malolos Cathedral.

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages...

Supreme Court A6
City Government of General Santos A9
Leyte V Electric Cooperative A20
Pampanga Electric Cooperative A21
Social Security System A21
Landbank A21

EMELITA DAVID TOMBO

Peacefully joined her Creator
on September 25, 2006 at the age of 62.

Her bereaved children **Gigi** & **Ahlloi**, **Vivian** & **Noel**, **Doret**, **Dodi** & **Christine**, **Jojo** & **Janette**; brothers & sisters-in-law **Alan** & **Meng**, **Nelson** & **Beth**, **Oscar, Jr.** (†) & **Nida**; grandchildren **Renzy**, **Mico**, **Abbie**, **Jamick**, **Bianca**, **An**, **April**, **Alexa**, **Arielle**, **Etton**, **Carlo**, **Eugene** and **Bryan**; nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Good Shepherd Memorial Chapel, McArthur Highway, Dolores, City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will be on Friday, September 29, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at Good Shepherd Memorial Park.

"I am the way, the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

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European firms to help education

Chamber to join 'Adopt-A-School'

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE has decided to take part in the government's "Adopt-A-School" program to contribute to the improvement of the "deteriorating" system of education.

ECCP executive vice president Henry Schumacher said foreign firms saw it fit to support the new chief of the Department of Education by joining the program, among others.

"Education Secretary Jesli Lapus needs the support of the private sector to overhaul the mismatch in the country's educational programs and the actual needs of the market," Schumacher said.

"Having a manager at the helm of the DepEd will also make it easier for our members to accept a public-private partnership," he added.

He said ECCP members were willing to participate in the "Adopt-A-School" program as it has a wide menu selection from which companies can choose from.

The program was put up through Republic Act No. 8525 or "Adopt-A-School Act" of 1998 to allow private entities to help public schools through various programs and support packages including construction of facilities, donation of books and computers, and training of faculty and administrators.

Further, Schumacher said ECCP was offering to the DepEd the numerous vocational training curricula that were developed with German assistance since 1992.

"There is a high percentage of high school graduates who do not have the resources to enroll in college," he said.

"The programs, alternating between a vocational technical school and an employer, will allow these students to acquire skills and earn a decent living."

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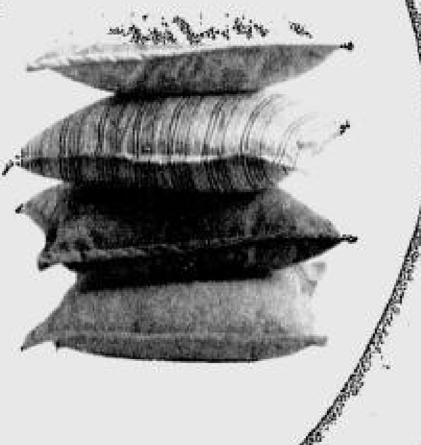

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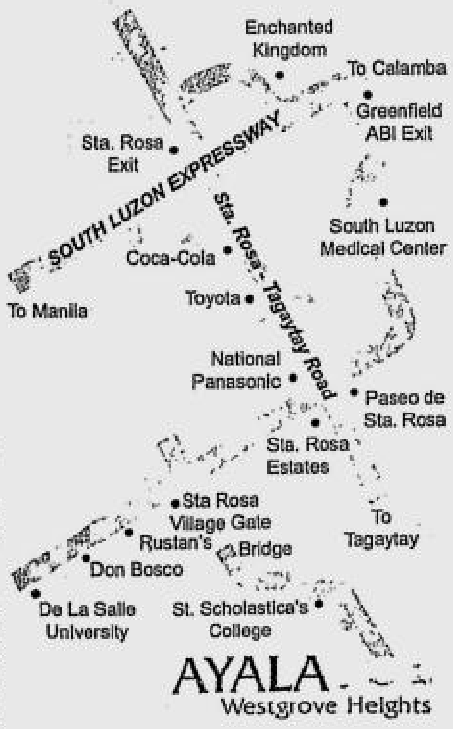
LTS HLURB Nos. R4-99-08-0092, R4-99-08-0093, R4-99-08-0090, 01844-R4-00-05, 01883-R4-00-09, 08196-R4A-03-08

Good nights are even better at Ayala Westgrove Heights

Sleeping blissfully is one of the by-products of living at Ayala Westgrove heights. And it's not just because the 400-hectare property cradles mountain breezes along the entirety of its rolling hills. And not just because the sprawling gardens and sparkling waters provide a freshness that soothes even the most frayed of nerves.

The respite that Ayala Westgrove Heights brings is also due to the security residents can experience here. Through the Ayala Property Management Corp (AMPC), the maintenance of common areas like the gardens, clubhouses, pools, orchards and such are meticulously taken care of. Even details like waste management, 24-hour guards, minor electrical and plumbing repairs, assistance in organizing parties, can all be coursed through APMC, giving residents unprecedented freedom from stress. More so, a rescue vehicle and fire-truck are on standby 24-hours a day for added safety and peace of mind.

This is the kind of care residents receive here at Ayala Westgrove Heights. And it assures not just lasting value and luxury for all, but most importantly, a lifetime (or even more) of good nights and great days.



IN THIS ISSUE

■ **More on** 'liquid gold' /C3

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

ECOLOGY
www.toyotaecosafety.com

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ● WEDNESDAY **2BU** ● THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Reinventing 'piaya' and other Negros specialties

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

IT WAS THE SMELL AND TASTE of freshly cooked *piaya* that made the first Negros Trade Fair I attended so unforgettable.

And every year since, I've hankered for that crisp crust and the chewy molasses inside. Alas, regulations in newer venues do not permit that kind of cooking.

And so, for this year's trade fair, the 21st, the *piaya* and even the food served at the eating area suffered from the lack of just-cooked goodness.

It was amusing to hear stories about how some Negrenses attending the fair at Rockwell compared what was being sold there to what their *Tia* so-and-so used to do. You can imagine how their singsong voices must have pronounced something as not as flaky, not as crisp, not as *fino*.

But it will always be that way so long as the original ingredients are no longer available and the people who made them are no longer around. The kind of flour or the lard used makes a difference. And the cook's way of folding in the batter and the timing for low-tech ovens can never be duplicated.

Still, it is commendable that many of the traditional specialties of Negros can still be had. How wonderful to know that *piaya* and the many cookies are always available.

The old is new again

And yet Negrenses didn't stop at preserving what was already there. They moved on and created new things. This is how new food specialties came to be. A few examples are the guapple pie of El Ideal, the mango tart of Virgie's and the butterscotch. Yes, all are variations of existing food.

But there are originals, such as the *lumpiang ubod*, spring roll of coconut pith. It was created by local cooks then sold through the *manoglibod*, vendors who went around town selling their wares in woven bamboo containers (*kalalaw*, *bilao*) balanced on their heads.

Every Negros fair in Manila highlights the new things with the creation of the Bulawan (golden) awards. Members of the Association of Negros Producers present their products to be judged.

And that was what happened at last week's trade fair where I, together with four others, graded each new food according to presentation, packaging, taste and originality or creativity. The results, however, hadn't been made public when this column was written.

Most of the new products were, again, variations on cookies and pastries. The most promising to me were chewy pieces that reminded me of Fig Newtons, only much better. Virgie's Fruit Twirls are elongated pinwheels of pastry and fruit jams of either pineapple, mango or *kamias*.

The most intriguing was the *piaya* cracker from Flavors of Negros. It's merely the crust without the molasses inside. For purists, the idea might be grating. (I don't know what their thinking is on another variation where the *piaya* uses super thin crisp crust.)

'Inasal' paté

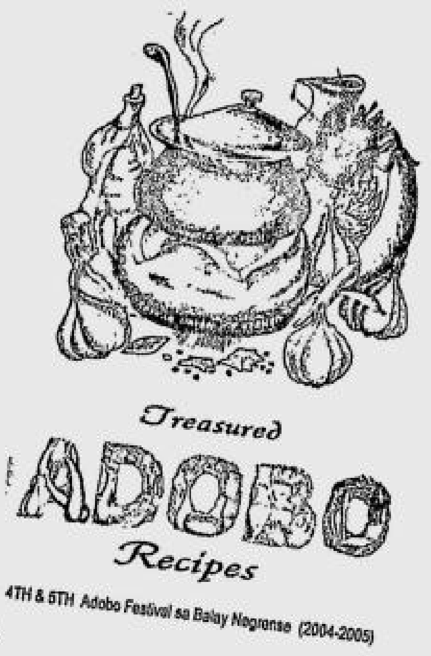
The crackers are mostly bland even with the added flavors of cheese and chicken and chives. So it was a blessing that it was served with what the presenters called chicken *inasal* pâté.

I've had *adobo* pâté but the chicken *inasal* was a first. It had the flavor of lemon grass and the color of *achuete* (annatto) oil. The chicken was shredded. Excellent with the *piaya* crackers. Unfortunately, the pâté was not on sale.

This year also, "Treasured Adobo Recipes," a booklet compiled and edited by Lyn Gamboa, was launched. The recipes are from the 2004-2005 Adobo Festival, a competition held for eight years now at the Balay Negrense Museum in Silay City.

First-prize winner Margarita Locsin made the *adobo* recipe of the Mañosa family. It uses chicken and pork as well as *camote* though a footnote says potatoes can be substituted. Like the Batangas *adobo*, it uses *achuete* instead of soy sauce.

The *adobo* recipe can also be mixed with rice and then stuffed in a deboned chicken marinated in an *adobo* sauce then baked.


Treasured
ADOBO
Recipes
4TH & 5TH Adobo Festival sa Balay Negrense (2004-2005)

A COLLECTION of winning *adobo* recipes.

Second prize was a vegetarian *adobo* by Remia T. Busel. It has green beans, squash, red and green bell peppers and *takway*, the shoot of *gabi* (taro), a favored ingredient in Negros. The very first winner of the *adobo* festival in 1998, Elizabeth Vargas, also used only *takway*.

Third place was an *adobong maskara ng baboy* (pork face) that was diced. If you add some fried soy bean cake, I imagine it would be like eating *tokwa't baboy*.

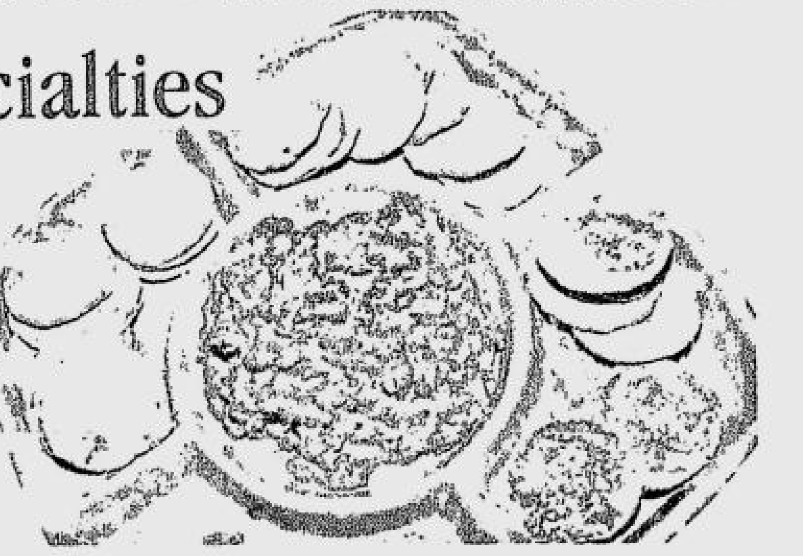
New words

Every time I read a regional book, I learn new words. In the book, *pedada* is defined as the native green and red bell pepper. Cabugao is *pomelo*. Leaves of *labug* that grow wild in the farms are used to line the pot when cooking *gabi* to prevent scorching but are also used for souring.

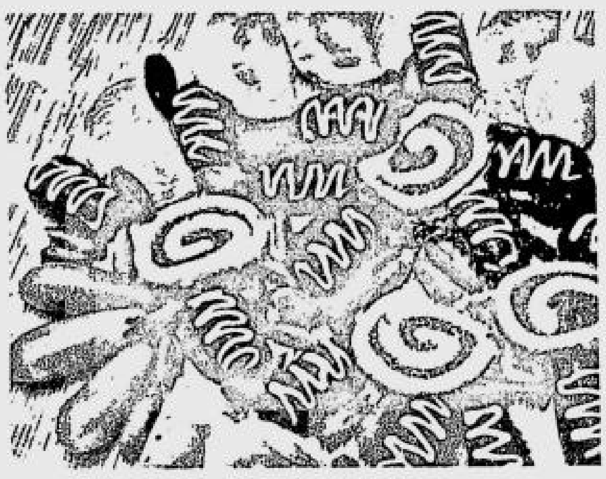
Silay artists did the illustrations for the booklet. Every letter in the word *adobo* was executed in the style of Letras y Figuras, a Filipino art form that was born and that flourished in the 19th century. The figures that formed each letter were vegetables, meat, utensils and kitchen equipment.

The launch also included two demonstrations by Glenda Barretto and Margarita Fores. Barretto cooked Lyn Gamboa's bottled clams and Fores, a Negrense herself, did the pork and chicken *adobo* of her grandmother, *wawa* Ester Araneta. Given the restrictions on cooking with open flame, they used electric skillets.

E-mail me at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com.



NEW-FANGLED *piaya* **crackers served with chicken** *inasal* **pate.**



FRUIT twirls of pineapple, mango and *kamias*

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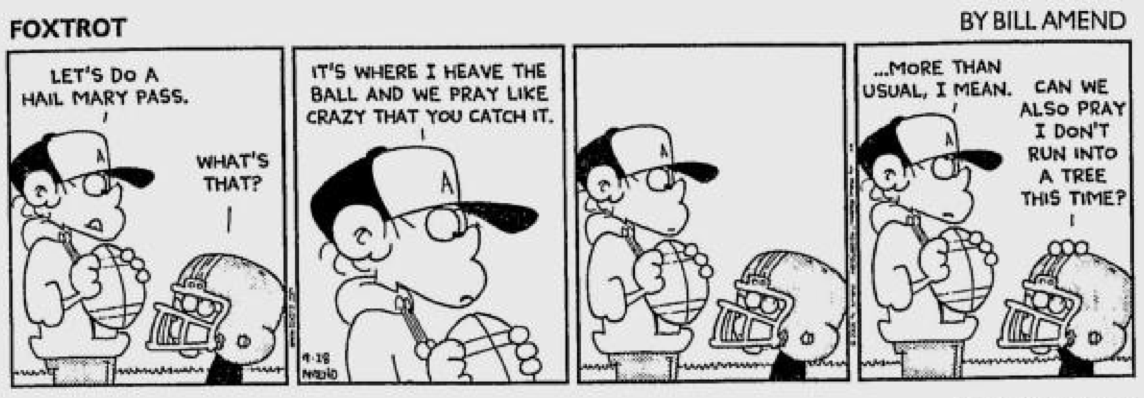
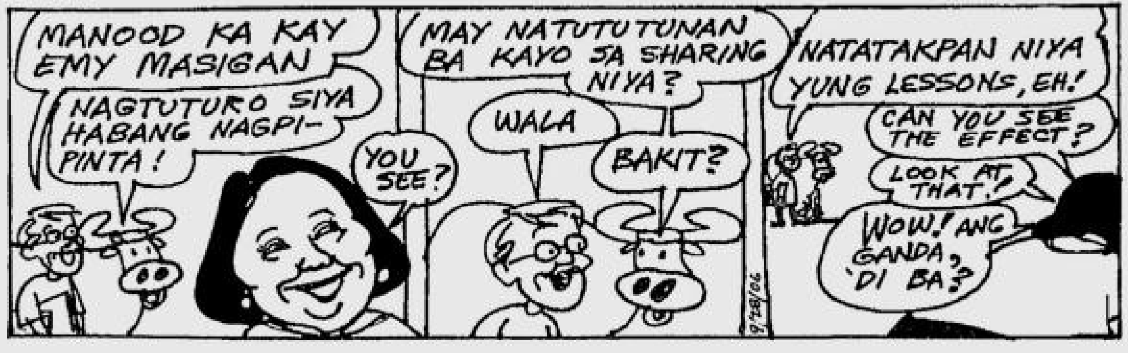
SKIN CENTER: ALABANG 775.06 87 / 0918 391 28 10 BINONDO 2422 07 28 / 0917 622 45 99 CALOOCAN 366 76 58 GREENHILLS 726 15 26 / 0919.498.61 96 MALATE 526 98 91 / 0921 317 34 18
MEGAMALL 637 76 43 / 0916 247 97 83 PASAY ROAD 887 36 30 / 0918 689 30 88 PASIG 647 38 16 / 0915.309 46 23

Finally, a place where vanity and self indulgence feel right at home.

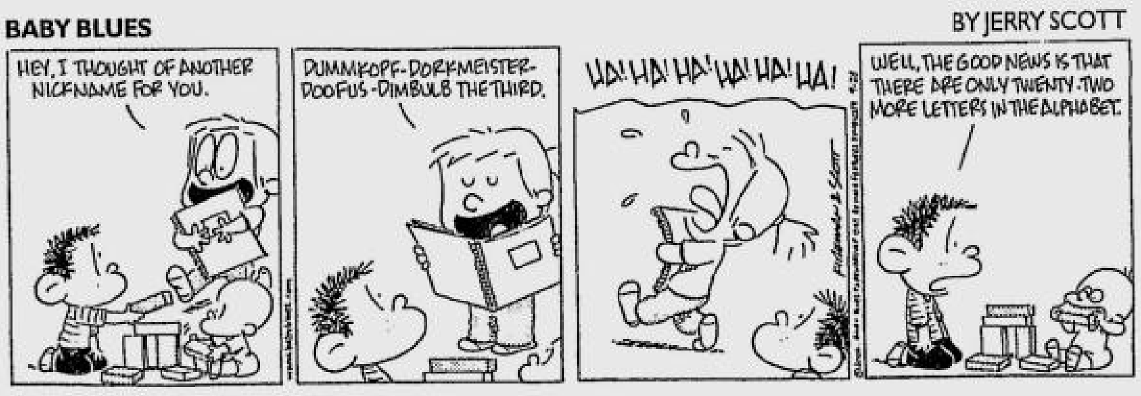
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


LET'S DO A HAIL MARY PASS.
WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S WHERE I HEAVE THE BALL AND WE PRAY LIKE CRAZY THAT YOU CATCH IT.
...MORE THAN USUAL, I MEAN.
CAN WE ALSO PRAY I DON'T RUN INTO A TREE THIS TIME?

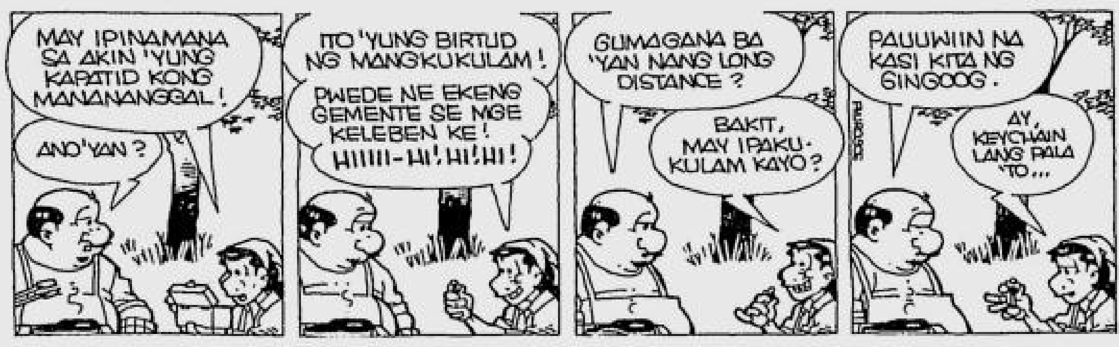
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MANOOD KA KAY EMY MASIGAN
NAGTUTURO SIYA HABANG NAGPI-PINTA!
YOU SEE?
MAY NATUTUTUNAN BA KAYO SA SHARING NIYA?
WALA
BAKIT?
NATATAKPAN NIYA YUNG LESSONS, EH!
CAN YOU SEE THE EFFECT?
LOOK AT THAT!
WOW! ANG GANDA, 'DI BA?

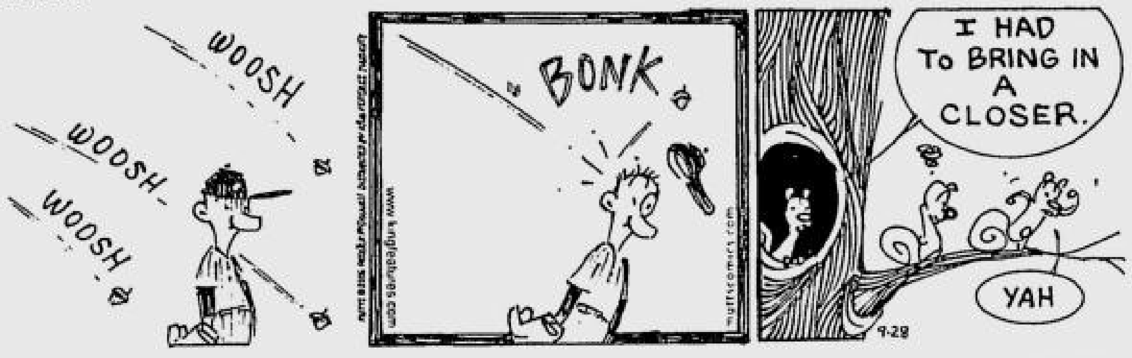
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY, I THOUGHT OF ANOTHER NICKNAME FOR YOU.
DUMMKOPF-DORKMEISTER-DOOFUS-DIMBULB THE THIRD.
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
WELL, THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWENTY-TWO MORE LETTERS IN THE ALPHABET.

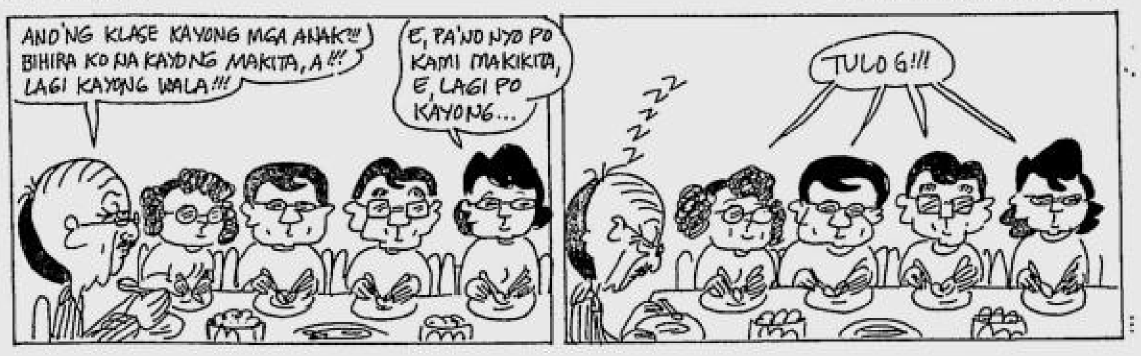
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAY IPINAMANA SA AKIN 'YUNG KAPATID KONG MANANANGGAL!
ANO'YAN?
ITO 'YUNG BIRTUD NG MANGKUKULAM!
PWEDE NE EKENG GEMENTE SE MGE KELEBEN KE!
HIIIII-HI! HI! HI!
GUMAGANA BA 'YAN NANG LONG DISTANCE?
BAKIT, MAY IPAKU-KULAM KAYO?
PAUUWIIN NA KASI KITA NG GINGOOG.
AY, KEYCHAIN LANG PALA 'TO...

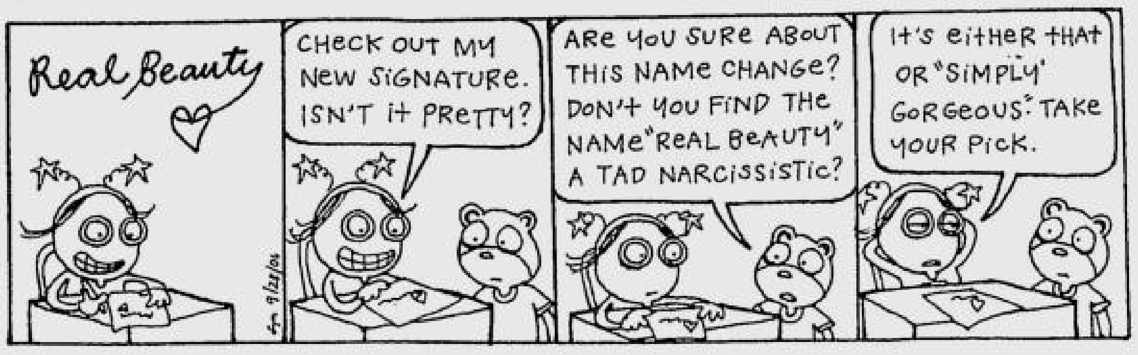
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WOOSH
WOOSH
WOOSH
BONK
I HAD TO BRING IN A CLOSER.
YAH

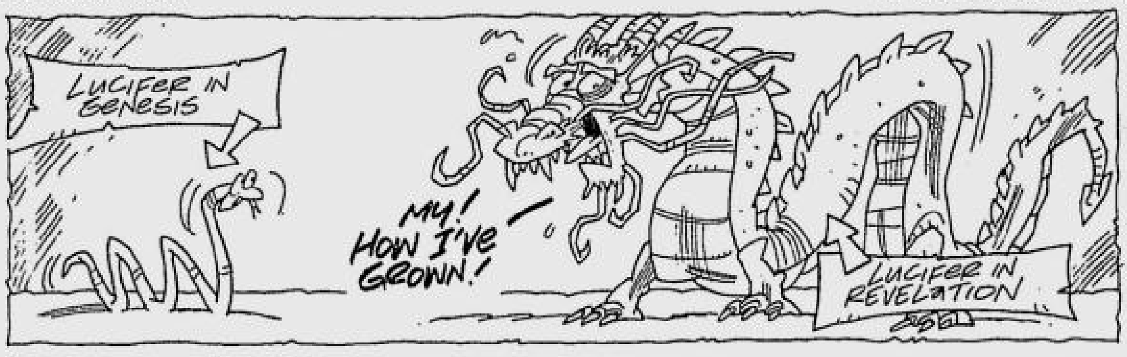
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANO'NG KLASE KAYONG MGA ANAK!!! BIHIRA KO NA KAYONG MAKITA, A!!! LAGI KAYONG WALA!!!
E, PA'NO NYO PO KAMI MAKIKITA, E, LAGI PO KAYONG...
ZZZZ
TULOG!!!

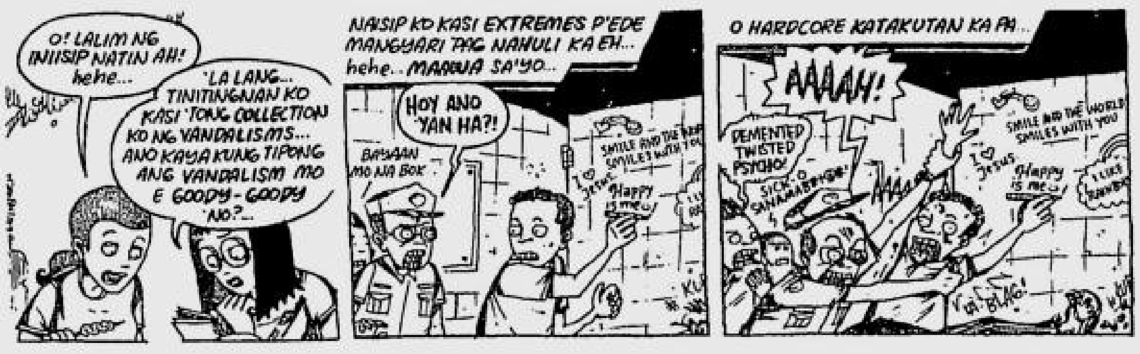
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Real Beauty
CHECK OUT MY NEW SIGNATURE. ISN'T IT PRETTY?
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS NAME CHANGE? DON'T YOU FIND THE NAME "REAL BEAUTY" A TAD NARCISSISTIC?
IT'S EITHER THAT OR "SIMPLY" GORGEOUS. TAKE YOUR PICK.

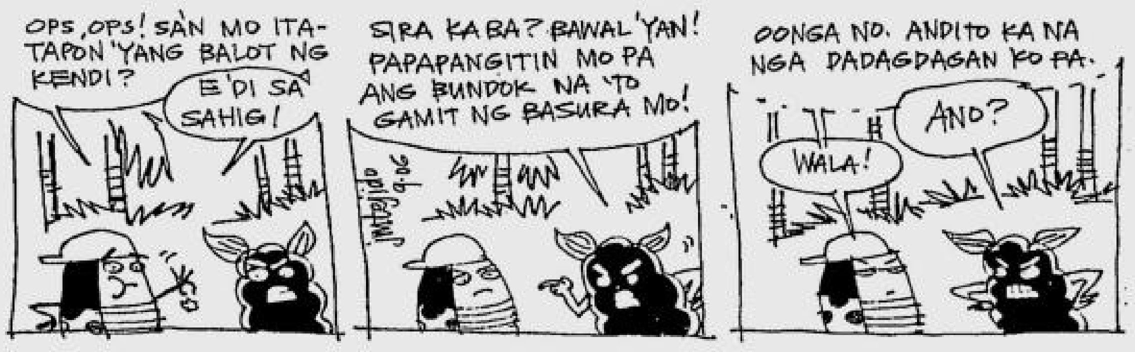
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


LUCIFER IN GENESIS
MY! HOW I'VE GROWN!
LUCIFER IN REVELATION

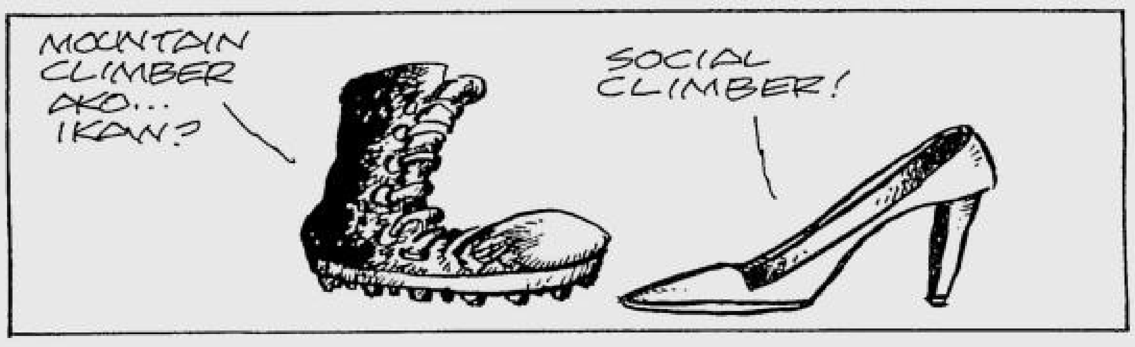
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


O! LALIM NG INIISIP NATIN AH! hehe...
'LA LANG... TINITINGNAN KO KASI 'TONG COLLECTION KO NG VANDALISMS... ANO KAYA KUNG TIPONG ANG VANDALISM MO E GOODY-GOODY 'NO?...
NAISIP KO KASI EXTREMES P'EDE MANGYARI 'PAG NAHULI KA EH... hehe... MAHINA SA'YO...
HOY ANO 'YAN HA?!
BAYAAN MO NA BOK
SMILE AND THE WORLD SMILES WITH YOU
I ♡ JESUS
Happy is me!
O HARDCORE KATAKUTAN KA PA...
AAAAH!
DEMENTED TWISTED PSYCHO!
SICK-O SANAMABITCH!
I LIKE RAINBOWS

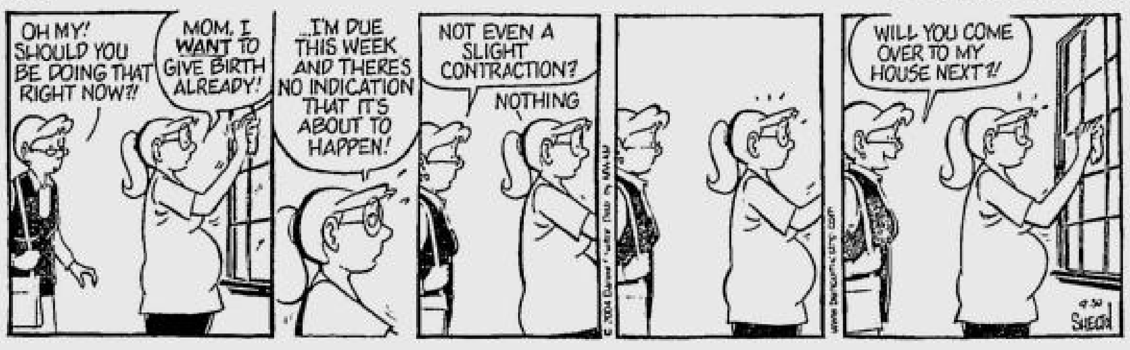
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


OPS, OPS! SAN MO ITA-TAPON 'YANG BALOT NG KENDI?
E'DI SA SAHIG!
SIRA KA BA? BAWAL 'YAN! PAPAPANGITIN MO PA ANG BUNDOK NA 'TO GAMIT NG BASURA MO!
OONGA NO. ANDITO KA NA NGA DADAGDAGAN KO PA.
ANO?
WALA!

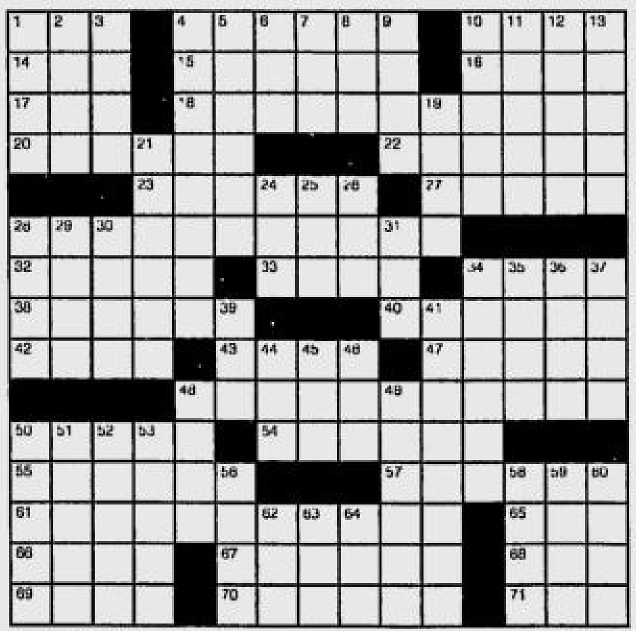
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MOUNTAIN CLIMBER AKO... IKAW?
SOCIAL CLIMBER!

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


OH MY! SHOULD YOU BE DOING THAT RIGHT NOW?!
MOM, I WANT TO GIVE BIRTH ALREADY!
...I'M DUE THIS WEEK AND THERE'S NO INDICATION THAT IT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN!
NOT EVEN A SLIGHT CONTRACTION?
NOTHING
WILL YOU COME OVER TO MY HOUSE NEXT?!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

9/28/06

ACROSS
1 Ale outlet
4 Styx ferryman
10 Aldebaran or Arcturus
14 Before, in poetry
15 Organism requiring oxygen
16 Kind of list
17 Faberge creation
18 Start of Robert Benchley quote
20 Renter
22 Amatory
23 Require
27 Like a hermit
28 Part 2 of quote
32 Stage whisper
33 __ dixit
34 Latin 101 verb
38 Manage to get by
40 Cater to
42 Looked over
43 Longing
47 Title holder
48 Part 3 of quote
50 Hold tightly
54 Excessively
55 Confederates
57 More snoopy
61 End of quote
65 Fr. holy woman
66 Patella's location
67 Blanch
68 Goddess of folly
69 Male heirs
70 Uncle!
71 Shade provider

DOWN
1 Banana wrapper
2 Entreat earnestly
3 Asks for alms
4 Having rhythm
5 Fine print word
6 Coach Parseghian
7 Ticket info
8 Sapporo sash
9 Hawaiian state bird
10 Bar accessory
11 Lone Ranger's buddy
12 Govt. in power
13 Rolls __
19 Alum
21 Sowed
24 Friend from France
25 Little devil
26 __ Vegas
28 Renown
29 Brit's indignant comment
30 Tiger's sponsor
31 Keanu in "The Matrix"
34 Eternally
35 Gordon's merciless nemesis
36 Screenwriter James
37 Polo of "Meet the Parents"
39 Klutz
41 Channel port
44 Actor Gulager
45 Solo in "Star Wars"
46 Last stop
48 Aboveboard
49 Ordnance officer
50 Wine holders
51 Argentine plain
52 Foreign
53 Parties in a conflict
56 Planted
58 Aoki of golf
59 Kett of old comics
60 Powerful stink
62 Poetic contraction
63 The man in question
64 Simpson judge

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

K	E	N	T	■	T	H	U	G	S	■	D	A	R	E
O	N	E	A	■	R	E	S	E	T	■	I	G	O	R
A	C	T	S	■	E	L	E	N	A	■	O	I	L	S
L	O	T	S	O	F	P	R	O	P	E	R	T	Y	■
A	D	L	E	R	■	■	■	A	E	R	■	A	P	E
S	E	E	■	L	O	G	S	■	S	A	L	T	O	N
■	■	■	L	O	L	I	T	A	■	■	E	E	L	S
■	M	O	U	N	D	S	O	F	C	A	N	D	Y	■
T	A	P	S	■	■	T	R	A	I	N	S	■	■	■
A	R	E	T	E	S	■	E	R	A	T	■	S	H	A
N	C	R	■	S	A	C	■	■	■	E	S	T	E	S
■	H	E	A	P	S	O	F	O	L	D	C	A	R	S
V	E	T	S	■	S	A	R	G	E	■	A	B	B	E
O	R	T	S	■	E	S	A	L	E	■	N	A	I	R
L	S	A	T	■	S	T	Y	E	S	■	S	T	E	T

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9/26/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a romantic. You have great taste. Others find you alluring and magnetic. You often have sexy escapades that others envy. (But it can be an emotional roller coaster!) You love beauty, and you admire strength in others. You're dogged about pursuing your goals. Something you've been involved with for the past nine years might end this year. (Because it is time.)

Birthdate of: Naomi Watts, actress; Brigitte Bardot, actress; Marcello Mastroianni, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): At this stage in your life, you're trying to figure out what you want to be when you grow up. (Regardless of your age.) That's OK—it's never too late to learn something new.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Continue to work to fix up, renovate, redecorate or improve where you live. You have a strong need to establish a dependable anchor in the world.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a time of fluctuation for you. You're not sure about where you live or even where you work. The winds of change are blowing in your direction.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Now more than ever before, you want to stabilize your work scene. You want a steady income, and you want it to be reliable. You also want to like what you do.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): With Saturn in your sign now, life takes a more serious turn. You're dealing with serious issues. Actually, you're starting to reinvent yourself!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's important to know that you have to let go of some things now—people, places and possessions. This is not loss. It's liberation!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You enjoy the company of others. (Librans don't like being alone.) Someone older might give you good advice now. Be open to what others have to say.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a time of great achievement for many of you. You see very clearly what is working and what is not. Be prepared to leave behind what no longer cuts the mustard.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): What you need to do now is prepare for something. You see that great things are ahead of you, but they are still beyond your reach. Study, research, travel and fill your databank.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might be getting along on less now because the income and assistance from others is diminished. Don't worry. This only makes you more self-confident and resilient.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Partnerships that aren't working might dissolve now. You are becoming more focused on your external world and your personal ambitions.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Continue to work hard even if at times you feel overwhelmed. You can handle this. Your reward for all this hard work awaits you next year.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		5				1		
	6						8	
1			4		3			7
		3	7		5	9		
		8	6		1	7		
7			5		2			6
	9						4	
		4				8		

Difficulty Level ★★★

9/28

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	6	1	9	5	3	2	7	8
7	9	8	2	6	1	3	5	4
3	5	2	4	8	7	6	1	9
9	1	5	7	4	6	8	2	3
2	4	3	8	1	5	9	6	7
8	7	6	3	9	2	1	4	5
5	2	9	1	7	8	4	3	6
6	3	4	5	2	9	7	8	1
1	8	7	6	3	4	5	9	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

9/27

More on olive oil

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

OLIVE OIL IS CLASSIFIED by the degree of acidity. The best are cold-pressed varieties:

Extra Virgin—the fruitiest, most flavorful and, obviously, the costliest of them all. It is a cold-pressed product of the first extraction/pressing of the olives, with 0.8-1 percent acidity. It comes in a myriad of colors from deep to golden green, to champagne.

In general, the darker the color, the deeper, the more reminiscent it is of the olive flavor, with exceptions, of course. But color does not necessarily reflect quality.

Virgin—First-press oil, good flavor and aroma with acidity not exceeding 2 percent

Refined—Containing the same chemical structure and the same amounts of monounsaturated fat as regular olive oil, the oil goes through a refining/filtration process. Refining reduces the acidity and makes the oil lighter in color and flavor. It is sometimes labeled as pure olive oil or light olive oil.

Fino—Blend of extra virgin and virgin oils

Olive oil—a combination of refined olive oil and virgin or extra virgin oil

Proper use

For baking and cooking, where the flavor of olive oil is not desired, use refined or light olive oil. Since the refining process gives this type a higher smoking point, this is perfect for high-heat frying.

Use olive oil for low- to medium-heat cooking, salad dressings and marinades.

Unfortunately, the best of the best virgin and extra virgin olive oils is not readily available in the Philippines. We even have to hand-carry it home, given the chance to purchase it. What we have is far from the real deal. I would use it on my salads, as is, with just a bit of salt, pepper or lemon juice occasionally or to dribble them on to my food just before serving.

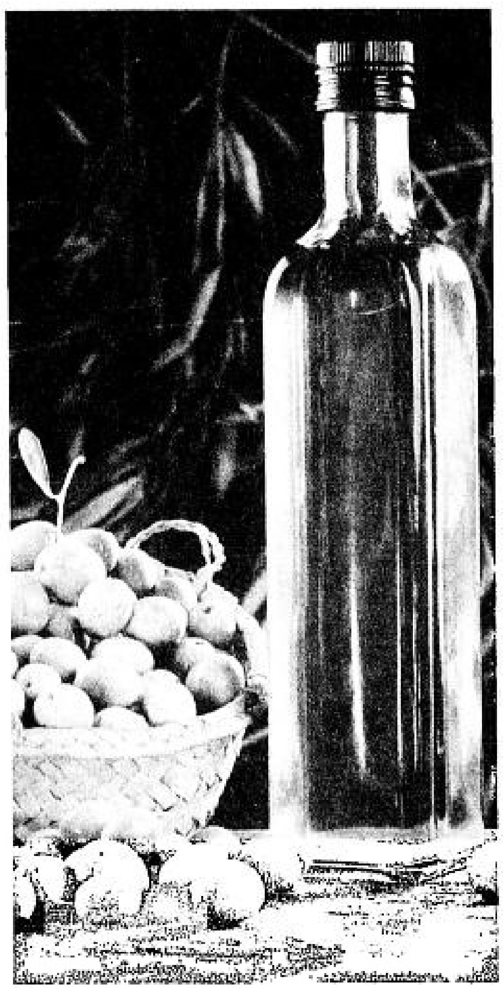
Every time I have exceptional oil, I don't really use it for cooking, except for the occasional sauté, or a quick pan-fry for that golden crust or whenever the flavor of good olive oil is essential to my dish. Remember, extra virgin olive oil and all its flavor break down once it hits high temperatures, above 190°C, ergo, a waste of such fine commodity! So use your "liquid gold," as olive oil is known, wisely!

Olive oil should be stored in a cool, dark place for up to six months. For me, the sooner it is consumed from the day it is made, the better.

Good cholesterol

Olive oil has many benefits. People in the Mediterranean basin, where olive oil is widely used, suffer less from obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, intestinal and breast cancer, and enjoy long and healthy lives. Olive oil contains phenol; the higher the phenol, the higher the HDL 'good' cholesterol. And the higher the HDL, the higher the level of antioxidants in the blood.

The fatty acid contents of olive oil are similar to mother's milk so this oil may be given to children. Older folks benefit from the oil's high content of antioxidants, which improves cardiovascular circulation and slows down cell aging.



EXTRA virgin olive oil and all its flavor break down in high temperatures, so use the "liquid gold" wisely.

FOR BAKING and cooking, where the flavor of olive oil is not desired, use refined or light olive oil.

Here are more recipes using Spanish Olive Oil... Enjoy!

Tuna: Over toast lay lettuce (red lollo rosa for color), a piece of tuna in olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, squeeze lemon juice, dribble with olive oil. Garnish with hard-boiled eggs and cherry tomato.

Green asparagus: Mix 3 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp vinegar, 2 tsp parsley, egg white from 1 boiled egg (chopped), salt, pepper. Spread over toasted baguette. Lay green asparagus spears. Garnish with pimiento.

Mushrooms: Choose large fresh mushrooms. Remove stems and sauté caps whole in olive oil. For stuffing: Sauté 1 c chopped mushrooms, ¼ c green onions, 1 chopped hard-boiled egg and ¼ c *jamon serrano*. Stuff on mushroom caps.

Sardine: Mix 3 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp vinegar, 2 tsp parsley, egg white from 1 boiled egg (chopped), salt, pepper. Spread over toasted baguette. Top with a chunk of sardine in olive oil. Garnish with lettuce and cherry tomato.

White asparagus: Spread mayonnaise over toasted bread. Top with white asparagus spears. Garnish with green and black olives and a dill sprig.

Anchovy: Spread mayonnaise over toast. Top with sliced boiled egg, anchovy fillet. Garnish with olives and pimiento

(Sources: Spanish Embassy, the Spanish Economic and Commercial Office, Oleo Toledo, Asoliva and the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade)

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Last chance to eat your way to a trip to Singapore

THE ONGOING FOOD PROMO "MUST Try, lah!" of the Singapore Tourism Board-Philippines (STB-P) ends Sept. 30. Diners have a chance to win a free trip to Singapore in the second grand draw to be held first week of October.

STB-P awarded recently each of the five winners in the first grand draw with one round-trip ticket to Singapore including a four-day, three-night accommodation in a deluxe hotel plus daily breakfast, and a Shop 'N Eat Tour.

Participating in the "Must Try, lah!" promo are Singaporean franchises Bee Cheng Hiang, BreadTalk, Fish & Co., Kopi Roti, and Singaporean restaurant Rasa.

Each customer gets one raffle coupon for every single receipt of P300 worth of food products from a participating establishment, which must include one of the must-try dishes.

The first five winners of a trip to Singapore were Jing Jing Wong in Bee Cheng Hiang, Rainier Tan in BreadTalk, Omar Bolaños in Fish & Co., Kaycee Peña in Kopi Roti, and Ditas Herrera in Rasa.

Call 8130946, see posters and flyers, or visit participating food establishments.

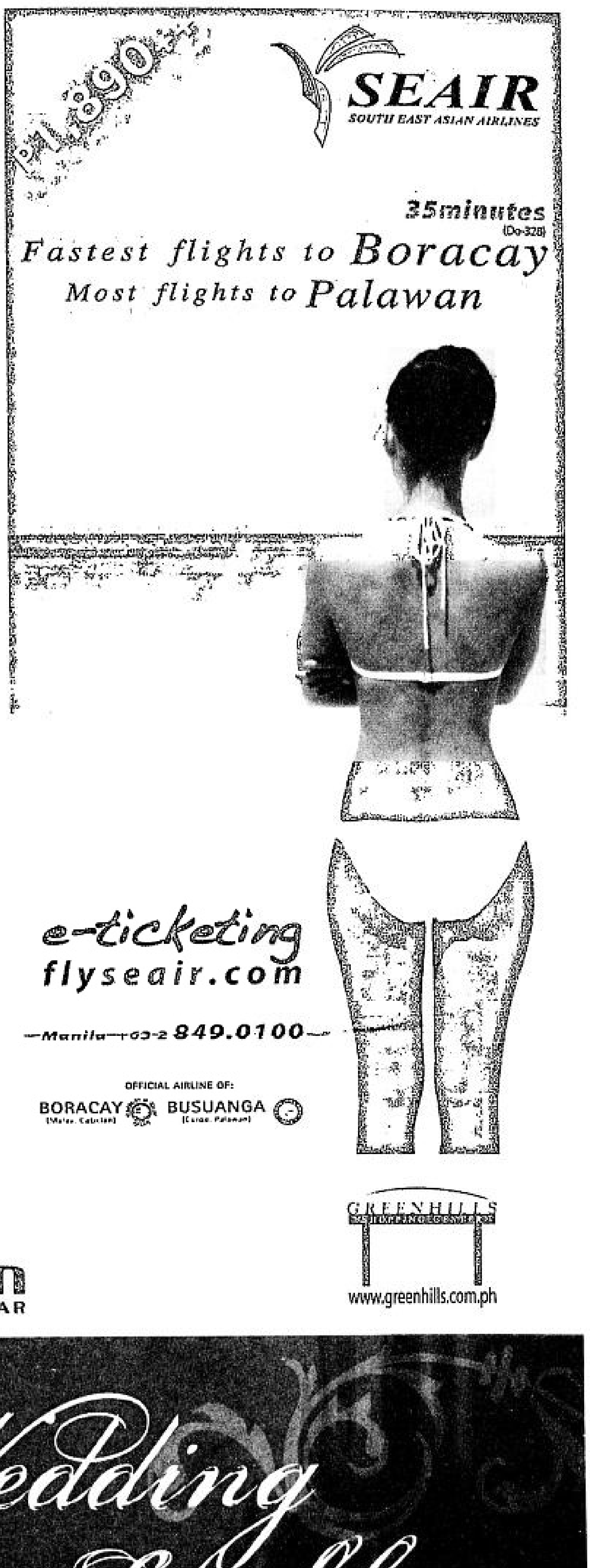
October feast

SHAKEY'S joins the annual Oktoberfest celebration with the October Feast Platter: a trio of Buffalo Wings, Crispy Calamares and Belgian Fries, with a pitcher of beer or root beer.

The promo is available Sept. 29-Nov. 9.

Oktoberfest, one of the largest celebrations in the world, originated in Munich, Germany. It commemorates the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig (later King Ludwig I) and Princess Therese.

For pizza delivery, dial 77777. And remember, if it's late, it's free.



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1. OCT 2 - 6 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC CAKE DECORATING - (P11,000 for whole course)
P4,000 - OCT 2 - 3 - Learn 10 diff kinds of icing flowers, figure piping. Bake & decorate your basket weave cake using boiled icing.
P2,750 - OCT 4 - Bake & decorate your own character birthday cake using star tips, simple borders & icing flowers.
P4,500 - OCT 5 - 6 - Wedding cake assembly: Bake & decorate your own 2 tiered wedding cake using fancy borders, scrolls, strings & icing flowers NEXT SCHED: NOV 6 - 10
2. OCT 7, 14 & 21 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE BAKING FOR DIABETICS
P3,000 - OCT 7 - Flaky (kaliskis) Empanada, Coffee Cheese Cake, Chocolate Nut Pie, Pineapple Flower Cake, Lemonpie. NEXT SCHED: NOV 11
P3,000 - OCT 14 - Banana, Apple Almond, Bars, Carrot Cake, Choco Nut Cake, Whole Wheat & Raisin Bread NEXT SCHED: NOV 18
P3,000 - OCT 21 - Brownie Supreme, Choco and Orange Chiffon, Banana Pecan, Spiced Raisin, and Chewy Golden Cookies NEXT SCHED: NOV 25
3. OCT 9 - 12 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD - (P11,000)
New method on Gumpaste Flowers, Objects, Marzipan, Ribbon Insertion, Finest String Works, Lace Pieces, New Recipe of Fondant & Chocolate Fondant. NEXT SCHED: NOV 13 - 16
4. OCT 11 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT - (P5,000)
Using Lace Mats, New Rolling Pin W/ Designs, Swags & Ribbons, Non-Stick boards w/ Flowers & Veiners & Quilting NEXT SCHED: NOV 15
5. OCT 13 // 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM - NEW CAKES - Latest pound cake w/ sour cream, Piña Colada, Tres Leches, Mocha Cake w/ egg white mocha icing, Chocolate Cherry Cake - (P3,000) NEXT SCHED: NOV 17
6. OCT 16 - 20 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - (P13,000. For whole course)
P2,600 - OCT 16 - Cakes: plain, mocha, choco, orange chiffon cakes, pound cake, sponge cake, moist choco cake.
P2,600 - OCT 17 - Cakes & Roll: malacañang roll, chocolate roll, brownies, pineapple upside-down, custard cake, mamon.
P2,850 - OCT 18 - Breads: pan de sal, dinner rolls, buns, pan de coco, ensaymada, honey bread & raisin bread.
P2,850 - OCT 19 - Pies: Buko pie, custard pie, pineapple pie, apple pie, mango pie, caramel tart.
P2,600 - OCT 20 - Pastries & Cookies: almond tart, San Nicolas cookies, camachile, oatmeal cookies, lengua de gato, coconut macaroons. NEXT SCHED: NOV 20 - 24
7. OCT 16 - 20 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - COLD PORCELAIN FLOWER COURSES WITH PORCELAIN RECIPE. (P5,000)
(Each set is lesson covered for one day) - a) Sampaguita, Sunflower, Waling-waling; b) Rose, Catlleya, Cymbidium; c) Magnolia, Gerbera, Lilies, d) Open Rose, Hydrangeas, Grapes. "COLD PORCELAIN DOLLS (P10,000) by appointment" NEXT SCHED: NOV 20 - 24
8. OCT 23 - 27 // 8:00AM - 5:30PM - SPECIAL BAKING - (P14,000. For whole course)
Learn to make 25 Kinds of special cakes from around the world. Each cake has a different icing & decoration.
P3,000 - OCT 23 - All Sponge Cakes: Nelusko cake, Black Forest cake, Decadence cake, Fan Torte cake, Fruit Torte cake.
P3,000 - OCT 24 - All Chiffon Cakes: Mango cake, Ube cake, Pistachio cake, Rocky Road cake, Coffee Crunch cake.
P3,000 - OCT 25 - All Butter Cakes: Butter Rum cake, Carrot cake, Kahlua cake, Moist Chocolate cake, Special Fruit cake.
P3,000 - OCT 26 - Cheesecakes: Blueberry, Mango, Tiramisu, Cookies & Cream, New York Cheesecake.
P3,000 - OCT 27 - Meringues: Sansrival, Sololhum, Queens Torte, Braso de Mercedez, Pineapple Meringue Pie
NEXT SCHED: NOV 23 - DEC 1 / FOR SPECIAL SCHEDULE PLS. CALL
9. // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - NEW COURSE & LATEST GELATIN FLOWERS W/O SUGAR - P3,000. BY APPOINTMENT

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W@W www.weddingsatwork.com
The Wedding Library

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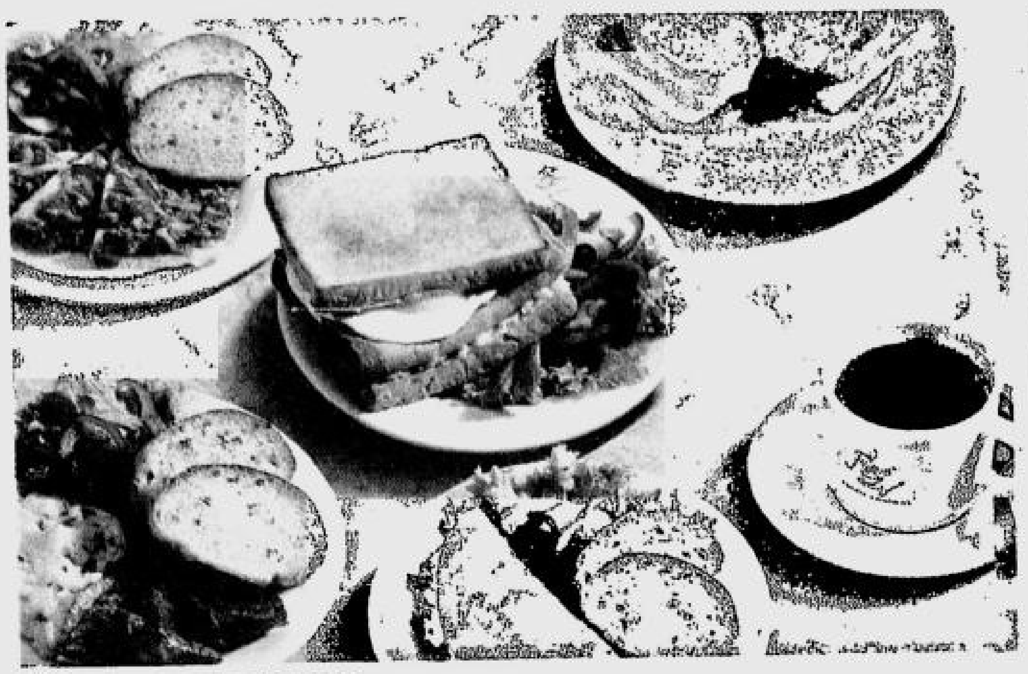
THE SEAFOOD Club by Red Crab at Greenbelt 3 and Uni Orient Travel Inc. present "Viva Singapura" food promo until Oct. 30. Buffet diners get a chance to win two round-trip tickets to Singapore. Buffet is served 11 a.m.-2 p.m., and 6-8:30 p.m. Raffle draw is on Nov. 4. Dishes include Popiah, Mixed Seafood Sambal, Fish Head Curry, Mee Goreng, Chicken Satay, Singaporean Chili Crab, Butter Ginger Crab, Crab Singapura, Tandoori Baked Fish, Grilled Fish with Honey Butter Sauce, Tomato Glazed Roast Pork, Prawns with Mangoes and Cucumber, plus an array of appetizers, salad and desserts. Call 7574129 or 8189585.



BREAKFAST AT FIGARO
Figaro offers breakfast selections including Creamy Scrambled Eggs, Spanish Torta, Filled French Toast, Croque Madame, French Mushroom Omelette and Croissants. There are 53 Figaro outlets to put you in a better mood. Visit www.figarocoffee.com.

Barbecues from around the world

DINING OUT

DADS Ultimate Buffet presents the Barbecue Festival of grill favorites from Texas and Hawaii in the United States, Thailand, Italy, Korea and Mexico. On the menu are broiled spareribs, salmon skewers, chicken satay and corn on the cob, as well as fresh vegetables and seafood, among others. Barbecue Festival is available in all Dads Ultimate Buffet branches for only P515, and P415 on scheduled promo days. Dads branches are at SM Megamall, Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Edsa, Padre Faura and West Avenue. Call 5317292 or 5323004.

PANCAKE House is offering three specially made hot crepes for any time of the day. The Ham Tomato crepe is filled with a mix of diced ham, tomato slices and shavings of Italian cheese brushed with butter and sprinkled with Parmesan cheese and dried basil. The Chicken Island crepe has a medley of chicken, corn, black olives, sliced tomato, cucumber and shavings of Italian cheese, jazzed with Island dressing. The Tuna Silky crepe is filled with tuna flakes and lined with Italian cheese and a hint of butter. Pancake House has 63 outlets, with the newest branches located at SM City Sta. Rosa, Petron Bel-Air Square, the SM Mall of Asia and in Eastwood City. Call 8942000 or e-mail phi@pancakehouse.com.ph.

QUEENS Restaurant introduces a special Diwali menu Oct. 1-31. Diwali, the Festival of Lights marking the beginning of the Hindu New Year, falls on Oct. 21 this year. To celebrate the occasion, Queens offers dishes from different regions of India. Queens Crystal Garden Restaurant is at 146-C Jupiter St., Makati City. Call 8951316 or 8951816. Delivery, catering and valet parking are available. Visit www.queens.com.ph.

FISH & CO. Restaurant marks its first anniversary by offering the "Best Fish & Chips in Town" for only P195 from 3-6 p.m. until Oct. 31. The dish consists of dory fish, topped with lemon butter sauce and served with chips. The Best Fish and Chips in Town is available for dine-in, 3-6 p.m., Monday-Thursday, until Oct. 31. It may not be combined with other offers and discounts. Fish & Co. branches are at the 3/F Greenbelt 3, tel. 7297431/32 and at Streetscape Shangri-La Mall, tel. 9102140/42.

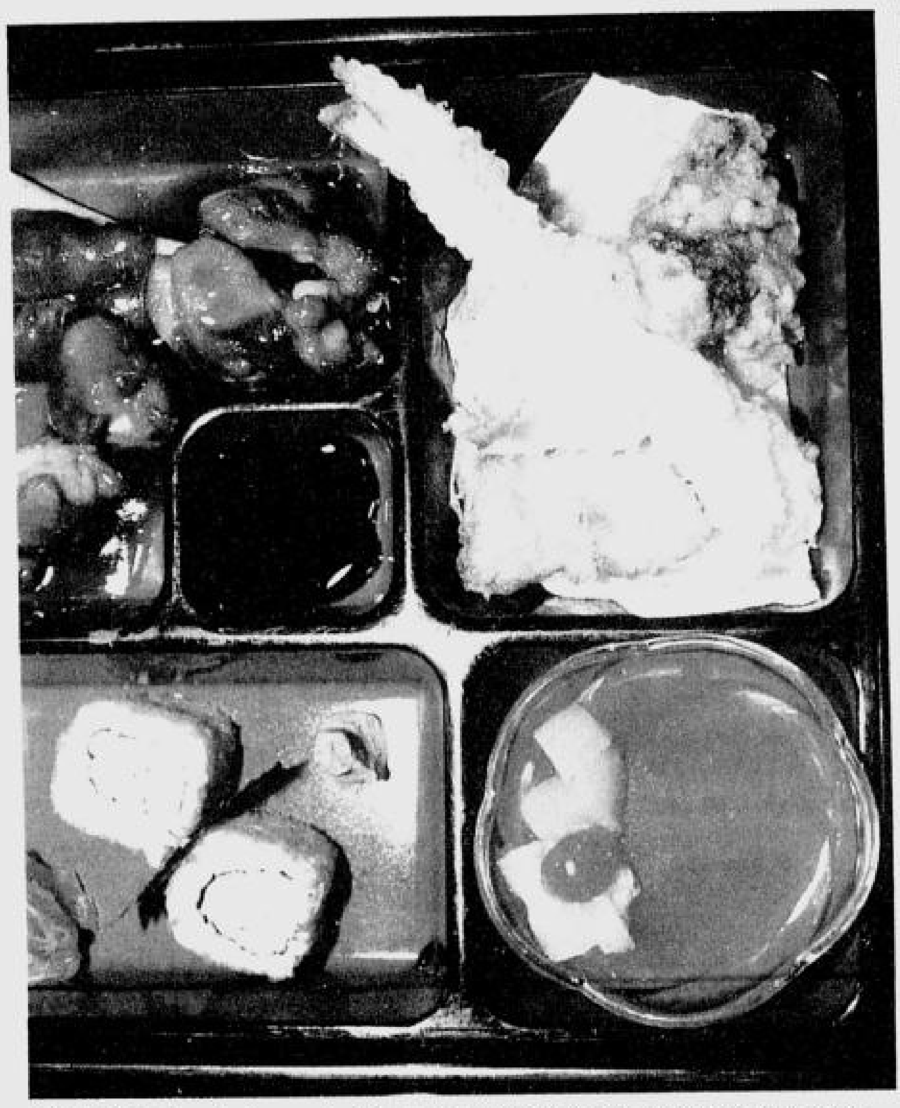
SUPER Bowl of China is giving away until Oct. 10 Eng Bee Tin sugar-free *hopia mongo* for dessert and offering a 10-percent discount on Eng Bee Tin mooncakes for a minimum one-time dine-in purchase of P500. Mooncakes are available in boxes of ones and twos and elegant tin cans. Super Bowl of China has outlets in different parts of Metro Manila. Also visit the affiliated Big Buddha Restaurant located at Greenbelt 3 Ayala Center, Makati.

OASIS Country Resort in La Union has a daily themed buffet 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday-Saturday, for P375 per person. The buffet offers Filipino and international dishes. For dinner, it has nightly specials like Italian, Thai, Japanese, etc.
The resort also offers children's parties for a minimum of 30 kids for P300 each. For business events and meetings, the resort offers live-in and live-out seminar packages and a snack meeting package. The Oasis Country Resort is on the National Highway Sevilla Center, San Fernando, La Union. Call 7255096 or 7255443 or visit www.oasiscountryresort.com.

HYATT Hotel and Casino's Market Café offers Honey-marinated Spareribs, Succulent Five Spice Duck, Roast Chicken Flavored with Cracked Black Pepper or Mustard and Lamb Chops marinated in Rosemary. Dishes are available on Market Café's exclusive lunch and dinner set menus, without extra charge until Sept. 30. Meanwhile, Beef Tartar is the featured classic dish at The Fireplace. Call 2451234.

INTERCONTINENTAL Manila's Gambrinus Bar and Sol y Sombra Poolside Restaurant features a buffet of Mexican bar chow consisting of Burritos filled with Picadillo Beef with Mexican Salsa, Macho Nachos Tortilla Chips with re-fried beans, Cheese and Jalapeños, Chili con Carne and sweets like Dulce de Almendras (almond-flavored Vanilla Creme Brulee). An added treat is the Fajitas cooking station. Call 8159711.

ROBINSONS Malls Foodcourt is giving away free concert tickets and Coke premium items to lucky diner during the "Food Trip, Sound Trip" until Sept. 30. Participating branches are Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Place Imus and Robinsons Starmills Pampanga. Concerts will be held at Robinsons Galleria Cinema 5 featuring Protein Shake, Sandwich and Imago, Oct. 5; or at Robinsons Place Manila Cinema 1 featuring Hale and Callalily, Oct. 12. Call 6836137.



KIMPURA offers *bento* meals, Monday-Saturday. Diners get to choose from its 12 *bento* offerings from P260 to P495. Kimpura has outlets at 2/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City (tel. 8932307/8924456) and Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7218816, 7218869). It is open daily for lunch and dinner.

Cooking with mozzarella

COOKING CLASSES

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL OF Culinary Arts is holding the following classes: Sept. 30—Mozzarella (all new)—Antipasti Platter with Marinated Mozzarella, Fried Mozzarella with Mushroom Sauce, Pasta Torte and Mozzarella Salad, Brined Stuffed Chops with Mozzarella and Prosciutto with Pomodoro Risotto, Mozzarella Garlic Chicken with Garlic Muffins

Oct. 2—Jewels of the Mediterranean (all new)—Iberian Chicken "Greek Style" with Greek-style Raisin Pasta, "Dolmathes" Grape Leaf-wrapped Baked Fish with Grapes Stuffed with Rice, Lobsters in Tomato with Saffron Rice, Cream-filled Baklava

Oct. 4—Many Ways with Beef (all new)—Beef Carpaccio Done Two Ways, Beef and Barley Soup, Espresso Beef with Portobello Sauce, Delicious Beef Ribs with Polenta, Beef and Bone Marrow Stew with Gravy Rice

Oct. 6—Not for Vampires! (all new!)—The Best Garlic Bread Ever, Creamy Garlic Soup, Garlic Chip Roasted Prawn, Garlic Stuffed Roast Beef, Pork Roast Crown Roast with Garlic Jelly, Garlic Chicken Served with Garlic Salad, sides, dessert

For complete schedule and inquiries, call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162.

Steak and roast

Learn the techniques for cooking good steak at Maya Kitchen's "Steaks and Roast" class on Sept. 30, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Covered are Beef Tournedos with Mustard Sauce, Minute Steak in Pepper Sauce, Pan Roasted Rosemary Chicken with Basil Mashed Potatoes Pan Jus, Roasted Pork with Applesauce and Rice Pilaf, Blackened Fish with Succotash, Cajun Butter and Osso Bucco Steak with Mushroom Sauce.

Lecture on preparation of basic steak sauce, marinades for roast beef and proper techniques of grilling are also included.

The class on "Waitering" will be conducted Oct. 7 and 14, 2-6 p.m. It covers waitering etiquette, table setup, bussing out, napkin folding and skirting.

"Baking Basics (Fundamentals of Bakery Production)," will be offered Oct. 3-6, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. It will include the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes. Attendees get a free baking cookbook.

In "Advanced Cooking," Oct. 3-6, 2-6 p.m., participants learn the technical aspects of running a kitchen. It will include a workshop on the preparation of sauces, international menu from entrée to desserts and sample costing.

"Basic Culinary," Oct. 10-13 at 9 a.m.-2 p.m., will cover kitchen fundamental, such as proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; etc. Actual preparation of dishes from appetizer to dessert is also included.

Enrollees get a free Mix and Match cookbook. "Home Bakery Business (Advanced Bakery Prod.)," Oct. 11-13, 2-6 p.m., provides the foundation for a bakery business. It covers baking ingredients and their functions; baker's percentage/math; commercial methods in preparing breads, pies, cakes, pastries and bakery products.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesday-Saturday) at 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati City, or call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108. E-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

Food seminar

ProActive Center will conduct a seminar the "Managing a Restaurant/Canteen Seminar-Workshop" and the "Managing a Catering Business Workshop" Oct. 9-13 at ProActive Center, Unit 1203 Antel Global Corporate Center, Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Complex, Pasig City. Registration is ongoing on a first-come-first-served basis.

Call 6673369/70 or 0915-4315375. Seminar fee is inclusive of manual and handouts, workshop materials, and certificate of completion.

The Maya Kitchen
CULINARY ARTS CENTER

Steaks and Roast Galore and More...
Join Maya Kitchen as it shows you different methods of preparing steaks and roasts served with distinct and exquisite sauces which enclosed all the flavors and aroma of your favorite steak recipes. Check out the schedule below and sign up now...
Steaks and Roast: Sept. 30 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Beef Tournados with Mustard Sauce, Minute Steak in Pepper Sauce, Pan Roasted Rosemary Chicken with Basil Mashed Potatoes Pan Jus, Roasted Pork with Applesauce and Rice Pilaf, Blackened Fish with Succotash and Cajun Butter. Bonus: Osso Bucco Steak with Mushroom sauce including lecture on preparation of basic steak sauce, marinades for roast beef and proper techniques of grilling. P1,000.
Waitering: Oct. 7 & 14 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Waitering Etiquette, Table Set-up, bussing out, napkin folding and skirting. P2,500.
Bartender: Oct. 21 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Basic Tools, Classifications of Wine & Spirits. Types of Bar Glasses & Usage, Mixing, Serving of Popular Cocktail Drinks including Garnishing with wine tasting & snacks. P1,500.
Coffee Basic 101 (Barista Course): Oct. 28 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Coverage: Coffee history, coffee process, Trouble shooting, coffee blend, machine know-how-proper grinding. Techniques to perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso doppio, Cappuccino, Latte Macchiatto; Cold Coffee Concoction: Millennium Kahlua, Milano mocca & Mocca spin. Bonus: Strawberry Spin with coffee tasting and snacks. P1,500.
CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON (Limited enrollment, pre-registration required)
Baking Basics (Fundamentals of Bakery Production): Oct. 3-6/17-20 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Baking techniques applicable to the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes. With Free Baking Cookbook. P4,000.
Advanced Cooking: Oct. 3-6/17-20 (T-F) 2-6 p.m. Technical aspects of running a kitchen from setting up a system for food safety (HACCP), grand sauces, menu forms recipe formulation/conversion, quality cooking, portion procedures, standard serving portions, average % cost for trimmings, cooking of vegetables, fruit, shellfish and meat; costing, metric conversion factors, demonstration of the preparation of herbs based dressing, marinade, wet and dry rub. Workshop on the preparation of sauces, international menu from entree to desserts. Sample costing exercise. P5,000.
Basic Culinary: Oct. 10-13/24-27 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation & safety; nutrition & nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs & spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing & boning poultry, filleting fish & meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry & meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. Free cookbook. P5,000.
Home Bakery Business (Advance Bakery Prod.): Oct. 11-13/25-27 (W-F) 2-6 p.m. Baking ingredients and their functions, baker's percentage/math, commercial methods used in preparing breads, pies, cakes, pastries and bakery products including costing, production batching with actual preparation of popular bakery products. P3,000.
Free Baking Demo: Oct. 27 (Friday) 4-5 p.m. Baking Business Product application with Maya Mixes, Blackforest, Carrot Cake, Butterscotch Cookies and Waffledog. Includes lecture on Sales & Profit Analysis. Pre-registration required. (Present 3 empty packages of any Maya Hotcake or Cake Mixes)
For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at *mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph*

Where are the coins?

By Linda B. Bolido

THE CONSUMER

A READER WHO SAYS HE OWNS a retail store wants to be a good businessman by giving his customers their exact change.

But he complained that he had a hard time getting coins—25, 10 and five centavos.

Reacting to the Sept. 14 column on the Coin Recirculation Program of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, he said, "My bank often says the BSP [controls] what coins are delivered [regardless of your request].

He said before the BSP talked about coins they should make sure they were available in the banks. "Go to any bank and ask for P1,000 worth of 10 centavo coins. Not a single bank can give that amount and the bank will not even entertain you if you are not a client. So where can I go to get coins?"

The reader also pointed out that many government agencies did not give exact change when people transacted business with them. "From the LTO (Land Transportation Office) to local/city governments to the BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) and all government (agencies) they also do not give change. What is worse they first get your money and issue the official receipt later without the change. And I forgot the *lagay*. Where is my official receipt for that?"

He said BSP should make sure they were issuing enough coins.

The BSP says it spends over a billion pesos annually to produce coins sufficient to meet the demand. "Today, the country has more than 11 billion pieces of coins in circulation, almost seven billion [of them] are low-denomination coins of 25 centavos and below... [translating] to almost 150 coins per Filipino, three times the regional [Asian] average of 50."

In response, Fe M. de la Cruz, director, Corporate Affairs Office, said the BSP had been producing and distributing coins continuously precisely to ensure there was enough currency "both banknotes and coins—to facilitate settlement of transactions."

She said there were more than 11 billion pieces of coins in circulation with some seven billion in low denominations of 25, 10, 5 and 1 centavos. Given these figures, she said the coin supply ratio in the country was nearly 150 coins per Filipino, three times the regional or Asian average of 50.

"Clearly, the problem is not supply but ensuring the efficient recirculation of our coins," de la Cruz said.

Most of the coins, she said, were stored and forgotten in piggy banks and jars, set aside because they were considered an inconvenience.

The National Coin Recirculation Program aimed to make people think of coins as a currency of value and to instill the habit of using and accepting coins, she added.

Complementing this is the "Tulong Barya Para sa Eskwela," a nationwide coin collection campaign of the BSP and the Department of Education for the benefit of public elementary schools.

Contributions to Tulong Barya may be deposited at participating retail outlets, banks and schools. Coins generated under the project were exchanged for banknotes by members of the Philippine Retailers Association who needed the coins.

De la Cruz said, to address the reader's specific problem, BSP could match him with coin-generating businesses, such as gasoline stations and transport groups that were near his store.

Feedback

Our thanks to Philips for letting reader Lito Mendoza enjoy again his less than a year old plasma television. The unit broke down before the one year warranty expired. Philips got rid of the bug in the system posthaste when they received his complaint.

Reader Giselle A. Franco said their telephone was out of order for three weeks. She wanted to know if they would get a rebate from the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company for those days when they could not use their phone. "It doesn't seem fair to be charged for a month when the line was down for a significant amount of time," she said.

The PLDT responded that she would get a rebate for those days she could not use her phone based on the records of the Repair Service group. "This means that the basis for the rebate will be from the date the line was reported out-of-order to 173 till the date that the repair was completed."

Our regular columnist, Marietta V. Giron, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph —Editor

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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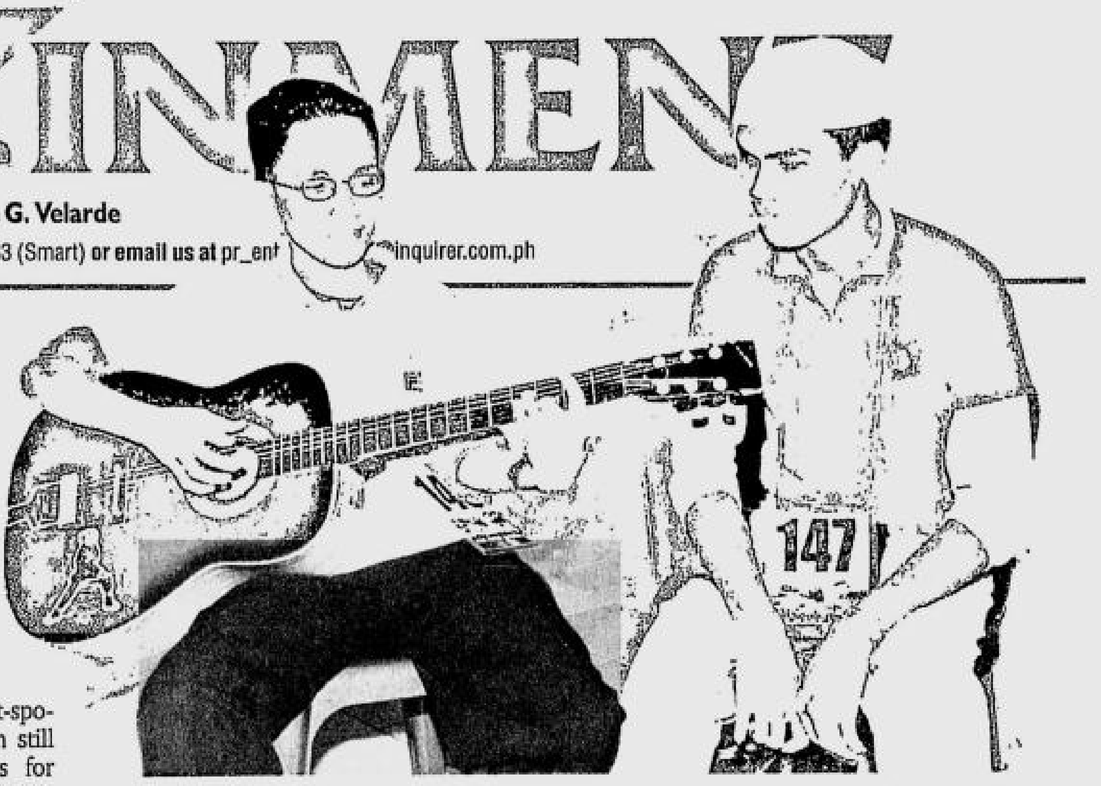
'Starstruck' hopefuls storm Cebu



COUSINS. Nolan Caballero (left) and Alfie Ancajas: "We will survive."

By Nini Valera

SMACK. An aspirant with "Starstruck" avenger Yasmien Kurdi

SISTER ACT. Ma. Elena (left) and Ma. Theresa Dungo

CEBU CITY—AUDITIONS for "Starstruck The Next Level," GMA 7's reality-based talent search, drew about a thousand young people to the SM City mall here over the weekend.

Ironically, Cebu, which delivers the most number of aspirants during auditions—at least 2,000 this year—has yet to produce a "Starstruck" ultimate survivor in its three-year run.

"So far, we've only had one contestant who made it as challenger," said Anne Marie Tan, station manager of GMA 7 in Cebu, referring to Bugz Daigo, a finalist in the show's third season.

Still, Tan predicted on Friday that this year's audition attendance in the city would top the previous years' turnout as the qualifications for contenders have been loosened up to include talents with managers or talent scouts.

Tan guessed it right, as the mall was filled to the rafters with young hopefuls who lined up hours before the mall opened at 10 a.m.

Alfie Ancajas, 18, and his cousin Nolan Caballero, 18, were among the last to take center stage at almost 10 p.m. on Saturday. They had been at the doors of SM as early as 10 a.m. Twelve hours later, they were still standing on queue and had not taken lunch.

"Okay *lang*," said Nolan, a soft-spoken Cebuano. "*Kaya pa* (We can still handle it). We had munchkins for snacks. They cost only P2.75 each. We will survive the day."

As the last group for the tryouts was called, Alfie and Nolan recovered the spring in their step. Alfie danced. Nolan sang, accompanying himself on his acoustic guitar. Their "moments" on stage lasted barely a minute, but this did not discourage them.

"I'm here for the long haul," Nolan said in Filipino. "This is my only chance to make something of myself. It's a slim chance, I know. But it's still a chance."

This is Nolan's second try with "Starstruck." He vowed to be back next year if he still doesn't make it.

JUGGLER. GENIE Tui

Nolan said he quit school for financial reasons, echoing a familiar refrain among thousands of other hopefuls.

Ma. Elena and Ma. Theresa Dungo, a pair of 18-year-old twins, acted out a mother-and-daughter confrontation scene to showcase their acting talent.

"We wanted to be different," said Elena. "Acting is more challenging than singing or dancing."

The siblings have already been contestants on the local show "Oi."

Like the twins, nursing student Genie Pasagui Tui, 19, already had the taste of the limelight.

Pretty Genie is a juggler.

"I learned how to juggle in school," she told INQUIRER Entertainment. " Lately, I have been performing for different organizations."

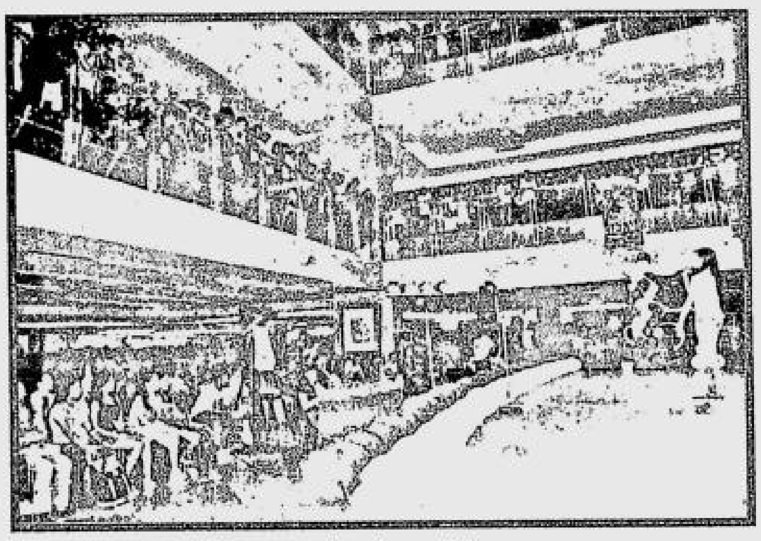
Even if money isn't a problem for Genie, she said the lure of stardom is stronger than the prospect of a nursing job overseas.

"There are thousands of nurses going abroad," she said. "But I have this talent (juggling), which makes me different."

"Starstruck" survivor Yasmien Kurdi acted as audition master during the early part of the screening. She even danced with one of the hopefuls.

Asked by the local press how her life had changed after being named First Princess in the reality show's first season, Yasmien quipped: "The public now knows me and it's a very nice feeling."

(*"Starstruck" auditions will be held Saturdays and Sundays at the GMA Network Center in Quezon City until Nov. 5; SM Davao, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, CSI Mall Dagupan, Oct. 28 and 29, LCC Mall Legazpi, Oct. 14 and 15, SM Clark, Oct. 21 and 22, SM Bacoor, Oct. 28 and 29, and SM Lipa, Nov. 4 and 5.*)



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The maker, not the medium

By Marinel R. Cruz

DIGITAL filmmaker Jon Red

RUDY ESPERAS

"THE DIGITAL MEDIUM should not be blamed for filmmakers' faults. It's the wrong practices in digital movie-making that should be addressed."

Independent filmmaker and producer Jon Red was reacting to the article, "The downside of digital," which came out in INQUIRER Entertainment on Sunday. German media critic Tilman Baumgärtel cited the 10 most common "shortcomings" of digital movies.

According to Red, Baumgärtel, a professor at the UP Film Institute, identified lapses or errors in some of the digital films he watched but failed to point out that these were committed by the filmmakers.

"I appreciate the points he raised. All of them are valid, except the writer should direct his comments to the hand that pulls the trigger, not the gun, so to speak," Red stressed. "It's important that we point this out to young filmmakers so as not to discourage them."

Red protested Baumgärtel's comment on the failure of most local digital films to influence to its audience because of their "dangerous lack of restraint."

"We must note that because of digital filmmaking, the monopoly of big movie outfits is slowly being stamped out. Now, everybody gets to express their ideas," Red said. "It is because of this that good films like 'Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros,' 'Ilusyon,' 'Kubrador' and 'Imahe Nasyon' were created."

In the article, Baumgärtel stated that films made using 35-millimeter are generally better than digital.

Red argued: "'Superman Returns' was made with digital cameras, but this doesn't make it inferior to the other 'Superman' movies. If we talk about aesthetics, we cannot just say 35 mm is better. It really depends on the subject matter. That type of thinking is too conventional."

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"KAKAIBANG Idol" nominees (from left) Leonard Ocampo, Jhonalene "Jhona" Sison, Winjohn "John" Dakay, Kenneth Paul "Yova" Alonzo, Sheryll Anne "Shane" Romulo, John Jerrico "Jeck" Perey and Lalaine Enriquez, with host Ryan Agoncillo

THE 12 finalists in a production number

A different kind of 'Idol'

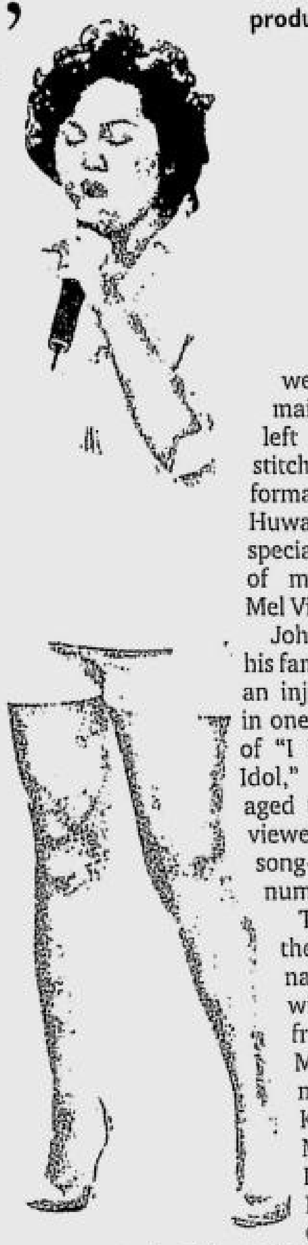
CEBU-BASED KENNETH PAUL "YOVA" ALONZO on Sunday won the "Kakaibang Idol" award, a special honor given to the "most unique and unconventional talent" in the reality talent search program "Philippine Idol" on ABC 5.

With the Whitney Houston original "Why Does It Hurt So Bad," Yova beat six other nominees to the award handed at the "Idol" Theater of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong. Yova is the only contestant from among the seven nominees to have made it to the competition's Top 40 list.

On Saturday night, nominees Yova, John Jerrico "Jeck" Perey, Winjohn "John" Dakay, Lalaine Enriquez, Jhonalene "Jhona" Sison, Sheryll Anne "Shane" Romulo and Leonard Ocampo performed before a different set of judges comprised of host/comedians Arnell Ignacio, Ethel Booba and Tuesday Vargas. All nominees passed the initial "Idol" screenings and brought home the highly coveted Golden Ticket.

Jhona sang the "Voltes 5" anthem, her signature song. Jeck performed his audition piece, "Broken Vow," and danced the hula during the instrumental part of the song. He also gave the audience instant dance lessons.

Lalaine paid tribute to her gay friends with the song "Di Ako Bakla," originally sung by special judge Vargas.



YOVA Alonzo bags the "Kakaibang Idol" title.

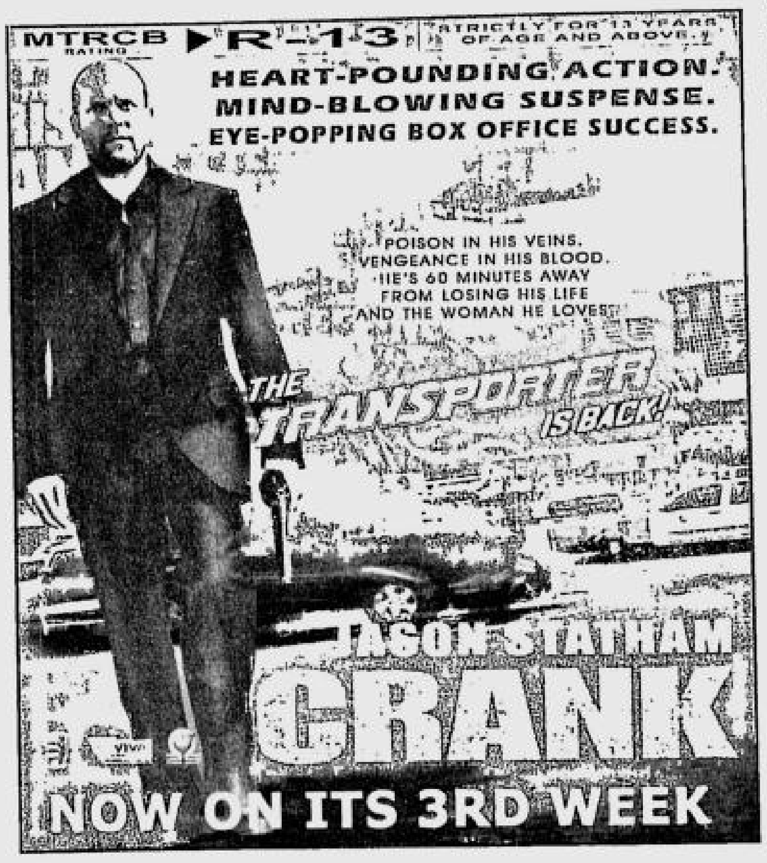
Shane, who went onstage in a maid's uniform, left everyone in stitches with her performance of "Kuya Huwag Po," with the special participation of musical director Mel Villena as "Kuya."

John failed to do his famous split due to an injury he suffered in one of the episodes of "I Love Philippine Idol," but still managed to entertain the viewers with a wacky song-and-dance number.

This Saturday, the battle for the final six slots begins with performances from finalists Gian Magdangal, Reymond Sajor, Jan Kurt Nieto, Miguel Mendoza, Drae Ybañez, Ken Dingle, Pow Chavez, Armarie Cruz, Apple Chiu, Jeli Mateo, Stef Lazaro and Mau Marcelo.

One contestant will be eliminated on Sunday.

Marinel R. Cruz



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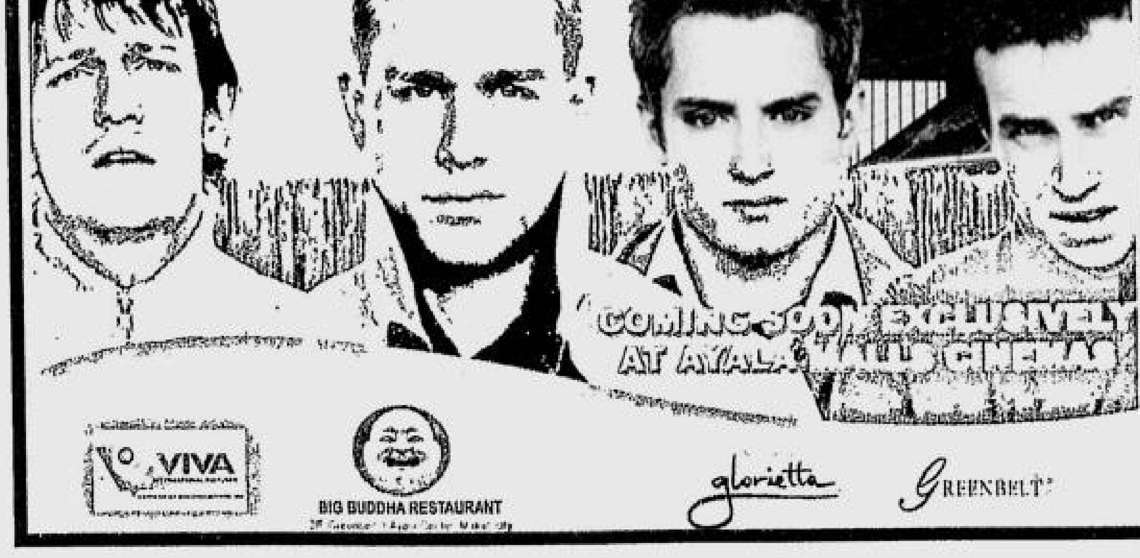

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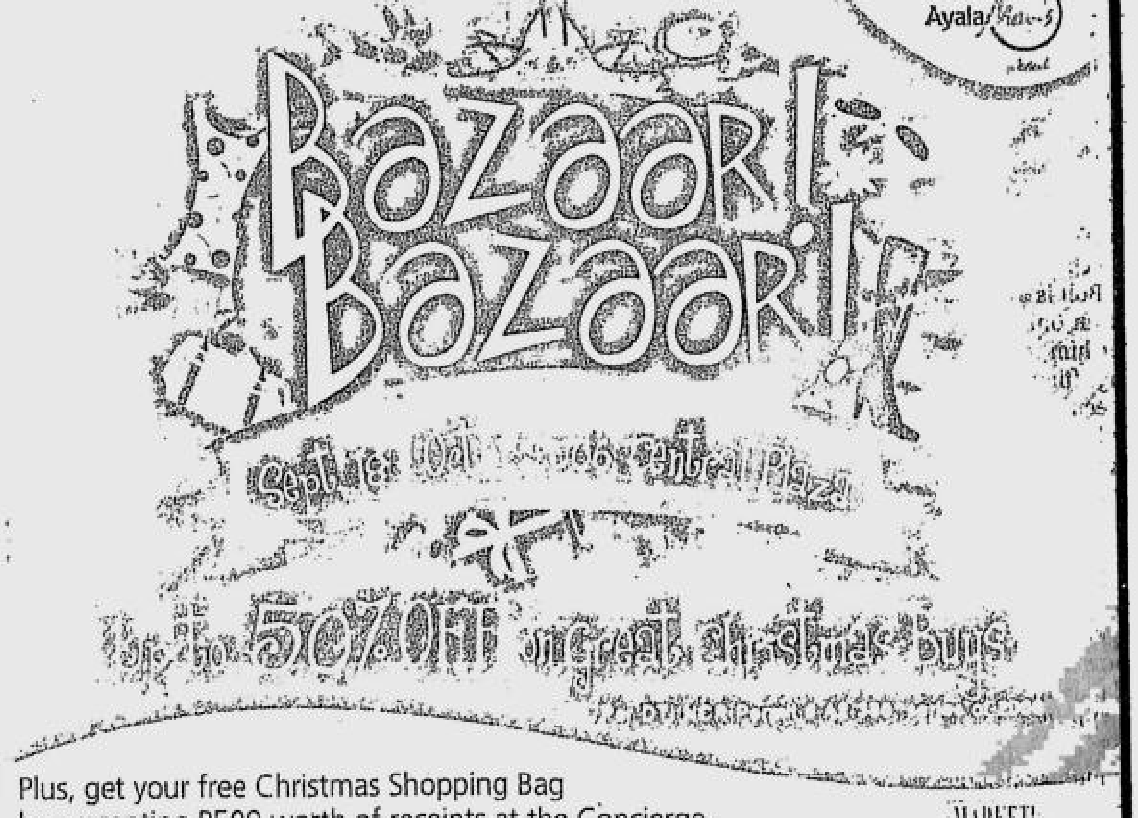

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Mr. Jazzman as entrepreneur

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

IS DOING THE JAZZ VERSION OF "AUtumn Leaves" and "Spain" anywhere close to running a bar bistro?

Where does the roles of the performer begin and that of the bistro owner end?

We are posing these questions to Richard Merk, who marks his fourth year as owner and manager of Merk's Bar Bistro this month.

"I began to absorb the real feel of business sense after a few months," he confides. "But I never really stop learning. Going to the bar bistro every day felt like going back to a classroom and my teacher was no other than what transpired that night."

In the same bar bistro, Richard sings with jazz and non-jazz friends on Wednesdays while running it six days a week except Sundays.

"It feels great," he says. "It's like watching your baby turn four."

Which means that while he keeps track of his jazz repertoire and hosting corporate events in his turf, he must make sure that his chef, waiters and waitresses and bartenders are all doing their jobs well.

He cites lessons learned in the past four years as well as the do's and don'ts.

"I learned a lot, especially patience," he says. "First of all, you must never stop communicating with your staff. You must be creative all the time. With your clients, you must be sensitive to their needs."

Richard recalls the bar's opening night: "The worst was when the air-con didn't work. But people stayed just the same. Then it dawned on me that they really came for the music and to give us moral support."

He admits he learned to absorb the manager's work by just observing what went on in the places he performed for in the past.

As performer, he has gone onstage in jazz and folk hangouts here and abroad like Birds of the Same Feather, Vineyard, Siete Pecados of the Philippine Plaza, the Sheraton Hotel in North Yemen and the Royal Hotel in Aman, Jordan, among others.

"You can say that I've learned the business side of entertainment from life. As they say, experience is the best teacher."

The last four years saw Angela Bofill, (his mother) Annie Brazil, Pauleen Wilson, Martin Nievera, Toti Fuentes, Mon David, Pilita Corrales and Gary Valenciano perform at his bar.

In one press con, Lea Salonga obliged with songs from "Les Miserables."

On lucky nights, even the likes of Cecile Licad and Otoniel Gonzaga performed through Richard's power of persuasion.

Incognito, Licad was just enjoying her drink when Richard announced to the audience: "Are you aware that there is a national treasure in the crowd?"

It was only upon seeing the crowd's insistence that Licad stood up and played Chopin on a Clavinova piano.

"Isn't that amazing?" Richard recounts. "Apart from Licad, we even get surprise visits from Imelda Romualdez-Marcos who always oblige with a song or two."

While his bistro bar was making good, Richard also made sure that the place does fundraising for friends in show biz.

But as it is, Merk's remains a place where seasoned artists can renew ties with their followers and where neophyte talents can woo new fans.

RICHARD Merk

Filmmaker takes on critics in the ring

CHEER FACTOR

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA—TIRED of criticism of his films, controversial German film director Uwe Boll trounced four of his critics in a Vancouver boxing ring.

The director of the recently released vampire flick "BloodRayne," based on a video game and starring Kristanna Loken and Ben Kingsley, issued a fight challenge to his critics several months ago. Fifteen responded.

"I like the critics now," Boll told a news conference after the fights on Saturday. "Everybody who was in the ring showed balls. Nobody dived.

"If they write about my movies without even seeing them then it's really annoying. If you make a movie like 'House of the Dead,' a zombie movie, what are they expecting? 'Schindler's List'?"

First in the ring with the director—now dubbed "Raging" Boll—was Richard Kyanka of Lee's Summit, Missouri, webmaster of www.somethingawful.com. He entered the ring clad in Stars and Stripes shorts.

"You are harboring a terrorist," he said of Boll to the Canadian crowd of about 600. "You are all guilty." A grim-faced Boll then won the fight in a first-round knockout.

Jeff Sneider of Los Angeles, a journalist with Ain't It Cool News, went down in a technical knockout in the first round after Sneider's trainer threw in the towel.

He said Boll, 41, had told him it was just a joke, a public relations stunt.

"Then he started beating the crap out of my head," he said. "I think he's a jerk. This might be PR but I don't want to keep getting punched in the head."

Chris Alexander of Toronto, Ontario, a horror-movie journalist with Rue Morgue radio and magazine, also went down in a knockout.

Fake blood

But, while on the receiving end of a series of blows to the head, Alexander took Boll aback when a stream of blood spewed from his mouth. It turned out Alexander had taken a page from Boll's filmmaking book; the blood was fake.

He said he got in a punch for each of Boll's bad films. "I think I got him once in the face for 'Alone in the Dark' and I got maybe one or two for 'BloodRayne.'" he said. "I have absolutely no regrets. This is the weirdest pop culture bizarre journalism stunt I've ever been involved in."

Before the fight Alexander said he had no intention of letting Boll win.

"Dr. Boll is the anti-Christ and we are putting him down," Alexander said as he stepped into the ring.

Nelson Chance Mintner, a website critic from Fredrick, Maryland, was the youngest fighter at 17. The amateur boxer also went down in a technical knockout.

Boll is also subject of an online petition for him to stop making films. Boll had specifically targeted fellow filmmakers Roger Avary and Quentin Tarantino for a fight but neither responded.

Now, however, Boll said he's ready to fight martial arts moviemaker Jean-Claude Van Damme.

"I think he's a poser," said Boll. "He cannot take a hit and he cannot throw a hit."

Boll's next picture is "In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale."

Like "BloodRayne," it's also based on a video game. It features Loken again as well as Jason Statham, John Rhys-Davies, Ray Liotta, Matthew Lillard, Leelee Sobieski, Claire Forlani and Burt Reynolds. *Jeremy Hainsworth. AP*

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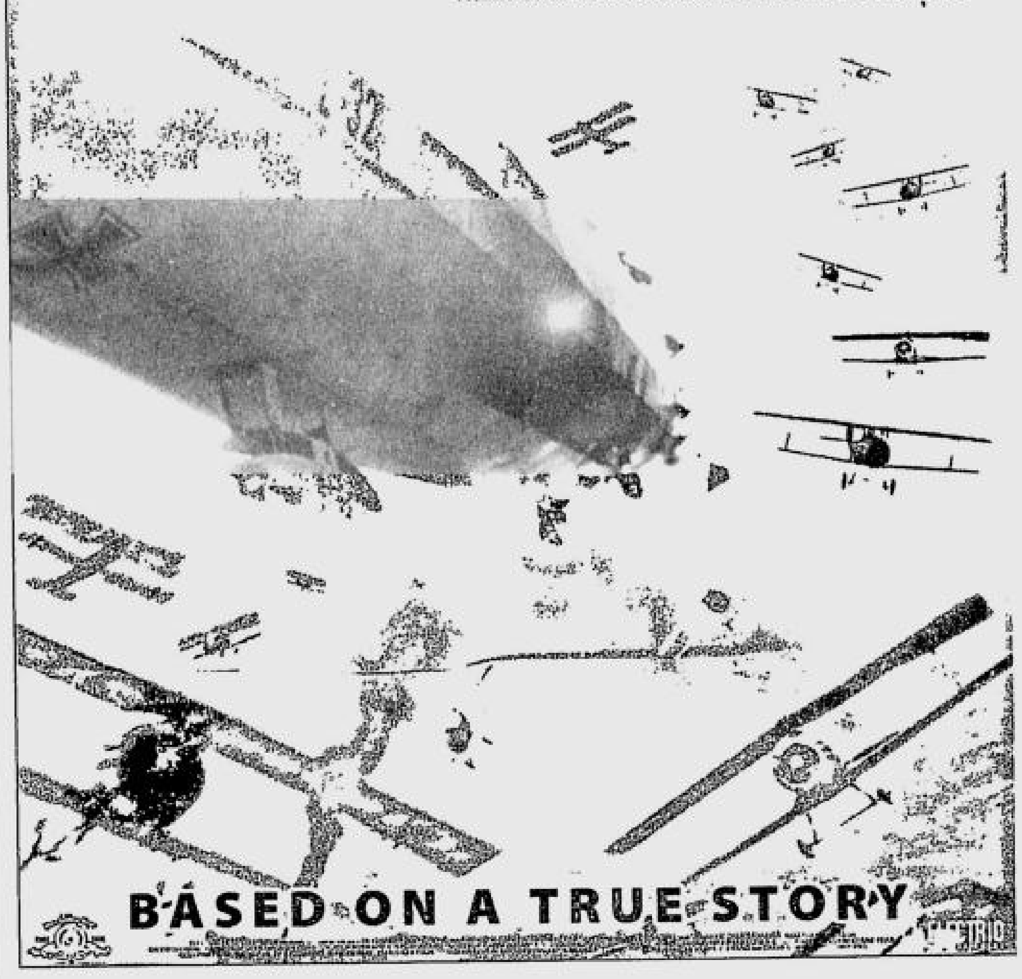
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ROUNDUP

Oil spill on 'Shorts'

"GUIMARAS: SHORT Films From the Oil Spill," a hour-long collection of short films on the oil spill tragedy in Western Visayas, will air on ABC 5's "Shorts," on Sept. 30 at 10 p.m.

The Guimaras shorts is a compilation of films directed by independent filmmakers Milo Paz, Emman de la Cruz, Jeck Cogama, Paulo Villaluna, Wilfred Galila, Kidlat Tahimik, Kidlat de Guia, JP Carpio, Seymour Sanchez, Raya Martin, Roxlee, Ann Shy, Khavn de la Cruz, Victor Villanueva, Drei Boquieren and Oscar Nava.

The filmmakers flew to Guimaras early September to shoot a 10-minute short film each on the oil spill, capturing on camera activities which began in Manila, then in Iloilo and in Guimaras. The four-minute version of the movies will be aired on "Shorts."

The project, a team-up with ABC 5 and the Independent Filmmakers Cooperative of the Philippines (IFC), aims to create awareness among the general public on the effects of the recent disaster. *Marinel R. Cruz*

PIA Arcangel

Kiss cancer goodbye

GMA artists, many of whom have relatives or friends who are breast cancer victims, don the signature pink scarf symbolizing Avon's "Kiss Goodbye for Breast Cancer" (KGBC) drive.

Joining the campaign are "Unang Hirit" hosts Arnold Clavio, Suzi Entrata-Abrera, Lhar Santiago, Rhea Santos and Lyn Ching. Other supporters include German Moreno, Pia Arcangel-Halili, Leo Martinez, Boy2 Quizon, Ara Mina, Lovi Poe and Cogie Domingo.

A simultaneous "Global Walk Against Breast Cancer" will be held at 6:30 a.m. on Oct. 22 at the Mall of Asia in Manila, Rizal Park in Bacolod City and DV Soria corner Tirso Nery Street in Cagayan de Oro City.

To join the walk, call 864-2900.

Cat Stevens hits pope

LONDON—Singer Cat Stevens, known as Yousef Islam after his conversion to Islam, hit Pope Benedict XVI on Sunday for his controversial comments about Islam.

In a speech in Germany earlier this month, Benedict quoted a Byzantine emperor from medieval times calling some of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad "evil and inhuman."

The singer, whose hits "Moon Shadow" and "Peace Train" made him a star in the '60s and '70s, said in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corp. that the Pope's words proved that he was not infallible. *AP*

Filipino connection in global entertainment

TODAY'S PIECE HAS TWO PARTS: THE first deals with Filipinos who have been making it in global entertainment, while the second focuses on the importance of a Filipino element in productions shot abroad for them to click with viewers here.

Filipino entertainers abroad include key members of the Blackeyed Peas and the Pussycat Dolls. The success that these two groups are currently enjoying makes local fans proud and reinforces the belief that Pinoy talents are "world-class."

On US TV, show biz magazine shows like "Entertainment Tonight" and "The Insider" feature Fil-Am junior co-hosts **Victoria Recaño** and **Vanessa Minillo**, respectively.

We've been watching both programs for quite a while, and can report that both Fil-Am talents are now being given more topics to cover—a sign that they're moving up in the US TV world.

And Minillo is attracting even more attention these days because she's dating **Nick Lachey**, **Jessica Simpson**'s former hubby.

In Hollywood, the Fil-Ams who have been going places include **Rob Schneider**, **Tia Carrere**, **Lou Diamond Phillips** and producer **Dean Devlin** ("Independence Day"), whose latest movie, "Flyboys," is about to open in town.

In world theater, aside from the Pinoys in different productions of "Miss Saigon," promising comers include the stars of the Ma-Yi theater company in New York City, a number of whom have crossed over to starring in indie movies.

In the performance arts, a number of Filipino soloists and groups have won top prizes in international singing competitions, and our dancers have proven to be similarly outstanding.

And Filipino movies have been garnering awards in festivals abroad, affirming the exceptional ability of our film artists, both in front and behind the camera.

All told, however, we feel that Filipino talents' "moment of truth" has yet to come, in the form of significant stardom in international films or television.

Will former Ms Teen USA Vanessa Minillo be "it"? Or, will the first significant global Pinoy star be a heretofore total unknown who will suddenly zoom to prominence and popularity in the extremely competitive field of global entertainment?

Now, to the Filipino element needed for an imported production to do exceptionally well here: Our two prime examples are "American Idol" and "Rock Star."

When "Idol" fielded Filipino finalists like **Jasmine Trias** and **Camile Velasco** and they survived almost all the way to the end, the show garnered record viewers locally. But, the year that **Sway Peñala** was eliminated early on, local viewers had no one to root for, the Pinoy connection was weak, so interest and empathy soon petered out.

The same thing happened to "Rock Star" last year, when Fil-Aussie **Mig Ayesa** gave eventual winner **JD Fortune** reason to worry. This year, however, there was no Pinoy anywhere in sight in the televised competition, so viewers' excitement level was decidedly lower.

Fact is, the Philippines may be regarded by some as a third-world country, but its enthusiasm for entertainment products has made it an important show biz market in Asia.

Therefore, international productions would do well to encourage a Pinoy connection in their casting, to make their showing in the now significant Philippine market more empathetic and profitable.

Superman on DVD

Superman's thrill-packed story is now on DVD, from comic books to TV to movies, including awesome advance footage from 2006's "Superman Returns." The "Amazing Story of Superman" DVD includes retrospective features and interviews with filmmakers and stars.

On NGC

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Fil-Ams have been going places

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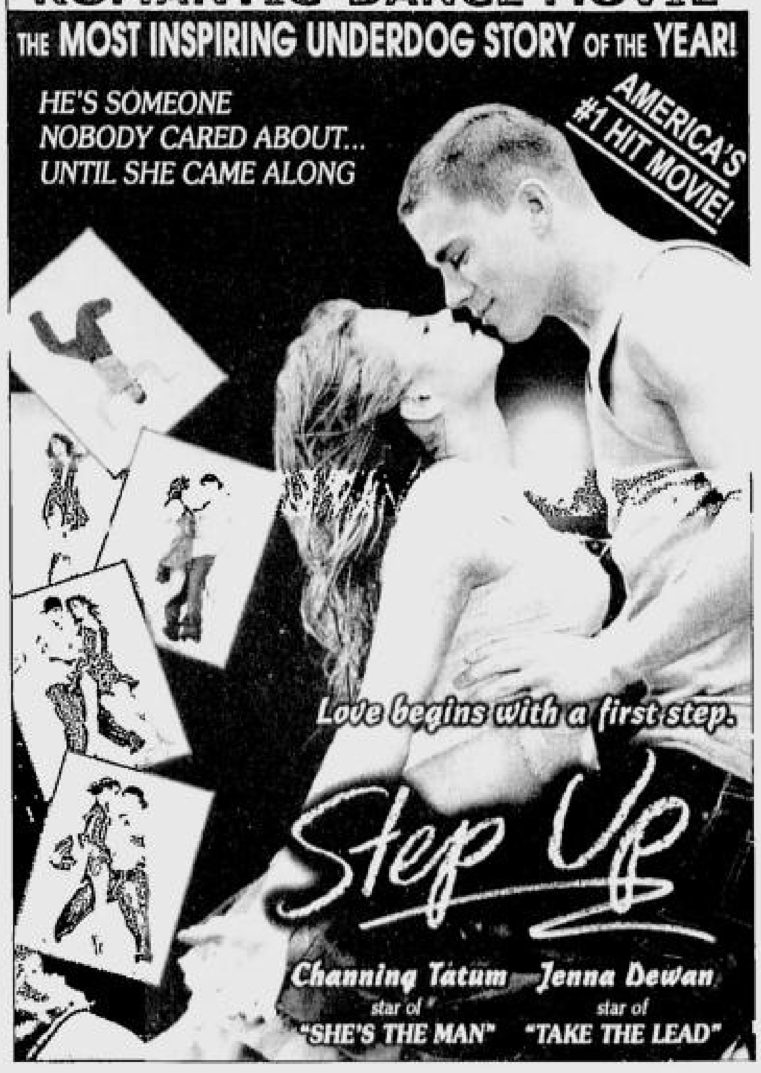

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ENTERTAINMENT

Dilana, new rock royalty

By Fran Katigbak

DILANA ROBICHAUX, runner-up of the reality TV rockathon "Rock Star: Supernova," has always been one very determined artist.

At 2 a.m. in Los Angeles (about 5 p.m. in Manila) on Sept. 16, the rocker phoned INQUIRER Entertainment by way of honoring a commitment for an interview that had earlier been canceled.

"This is the only free time I've had," said Dilana, with her distinctly deep, raspy voice. "I have been talking to the media for three days and I haven't had a lot of sleep."

The 34-year-old rocker was the only female to reach the show's finale, which was broadcast live in the Philippines through Star World.

Australian Toby Rand, Icelandic Magni Asgeirsson, and eventual winner and Rock Star Supernova front man Lukas Rossi of Canada joined Dilana in the Top 4.

Completing the new band are its proponents, rock idols Gilby Clarke (Guns N' Roses), guitarist; Jason Newsted (Metallica), bassist, and Tommy Lee (Motley Crew), drummer.

With solid vocals and a penchant for taking on challenging songs every week, Dilana was a strong contender until her controversial breakdown a few weeks before the finals.

She took flak for speaking too candidly to the media about the other rockers, especially Lukas.

"From one hour to the next, he's (Lukas) a different person," Dilana said during a press junket at the "Rock Star" mansion. "Every now and then, he gets one little nerve in me that just makes me want to punch his lights out."

Asked if there was bad blood between her and Lukas now, Dilana said, "TV made it look bad." Lukas even offered to give material for her forthcoming album, she said.

Nothing lost

Despite criticism on her songwriting abilities by the show's jurors, Dilana doesn't seem to have lost the drive to push her solo career forward.

Dave Navarro, Panic Channel guitarist and "Rock Star" co-producer, and Gilby Clarke, in fact, volunteered to help produce her very first album in the US.

On the weekend of this interview, Dilana was due to meet Gilby at the studios to discuss the project.

She will also join Magni and Storm Large, her closest friends on the show; Toby, the "Rock Star" house band, and Panic Channel in 28 key cities of Rock Star Supernova's concert tour.

Dilana's love of music was solidified at age 16, when she left her home in Johannesburg, South Africa, to become a professional musician.

Together with her European band, Dilana produced and performed hits in parts of the continent, including Holland and Scotland. Later, she settled in Houston, Texas, as a solo act.

"In some ways it can be lonely," she said about life away from her family. "You can stand in a room full of people and yet feel alone, but it depends on the people you surround yourself with."

Proud to call herself a gypsy, the well-traveled rocker speaks fluent English, Dutch and her native African language.

An adventurous streak, it seems, not only attracted Dilana to riding Harleys but, most importantly, developed her eclectic taste in music. "It's hard to say one particular thing," she said of her musical preferences. "Whatever the style… as long as I feel intensity."

Among the artists Dilana said she admires are Janis Joplin, Stevie Nicks, System of A Down, Led Zeppelin and AC/DC.

As to how long she intends to make music, the answer was quick: "Till the day I die—I'm going to be the female Johnny Cash."

Final name: Rock Star Supernova

LOS ANGELES — A southern California punk bank has settled with the CBS reality show "Rock Star: Supernova" over the use of the Supernova band name.

Under the agreement, announced last week, the punk band will keep its original name and the TV band will be known as "Rock Star Supernova."

The original Supernova, which recorded three albums under the name starting in 1991, sued CBS, the show's participants and Mark Burnett Productions in June claiming unfair competition and trademark infringement.

"Rock Star: Supernova" began airing July 5, with 15 contestants.

The winner, Lukas Rossi, named on the show's final episode, is expected to tour with the band—Rock Star Supernova, that is—and appear on its album. The group's first performance is scheduled for New Year's Eve in Las Vegas.

AP

'Il Mare' was here

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

THE BIGGER-BUDGET REMAKE "The Lake House" whisked moviegoers into the tale of a reality-altering romance just a few months ago. Would-be lovers separated by time, played by Sandra Bullock and Keanu Reeves, converse by sending each other letters through a "magic" mailbox outside their lakeside home. That reinterpretation of the Korean "Il Mare" worked its own magic, an involving, saccharine love story that starred two of Hollywood's most charismatic and bankable stars.

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JI-HYUN Jun in "Il Mare"

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- After all the hullabaloo, are **Plinky Recto** and her ex Mugsy really going to have an out-of-court settlement? The estranged couple caused quite a stir with their explosive allegations against each other on national TV. Sometimes, washing dirty linen in public can make bitterness run dry.
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Dilana, new rock royalty

By Fran Katigbak

DILANA ROBICHAUX, runner-up of the reality TV rockathon "Rock Star: Supernova," has always been one very determined artist.

At 2 a.m. in Los Angeles (about 5 p.m. in Manila) on Sept. 16, the rocker phoned INQUIRER Entertainment by way of honoring a commitment for an interview that had earlier been canceled.

"This is the only free time I've had," said Dilana, with her distinctly deep, raspy voice. "I have been talking to the media for three days and I haven't had a lot of sleep."

The 34-year-old rocker was the only female to reach the show's finale, which was broadcast live in the Philippines through Star World.

Australian Toby Rand, Icelandic Magni Asgeirsson, and eventual winner and Rock Star Supernova front man Lukas Rossi of Canada joined Dilana in the Top 4.

Completing the new band are its proponents, rock idols Gilby Clarke (Guns N' Roses), guitarist; Jason Newsted (Metallica), bassist, and Tommy Lee (Motley Crew), drummer.

With solid vocals and a penchant for taking on challenging songs every week, Dilana was a strong contender until her controversial breakdown a few weeks before the finals.

She took flak for speaking too candidly to the media about the other rockers, especially Lukas.

"From one hour to the next, he's (Lukas) a different person," Dilana said during a press junket at the "Rock Star" mansion. "Every now and then, he gets one little nerve in me that just makes me want to punch his lights out."

Asked if there was bad blood between her and Lukas now, Dilana said, "TV made it look bad." Lukas even offered to give material for her forthcoming album, she said.

Nothing lost

Despite criticism on her songwriting abilities by the show's jurors, Dilana doesn't seem to have lost the drive to push her solo career forward.

Dave Navarro, Panic Channel guitarist and "Rock Star" co-producer, and Gilby Clarke, in fact, volunteered to help produce her very first album in the US.

On the weekend of this interview, Dilana was due to meet Gilby at the studios to discuss the project.

She will also join Magni and Storm Large, her closest friends on the show; Toby, the "Rock Star" house band, and Panic Channel in 28 key cities of Rock Star Supernova's concert tour.

Dilana's love of music was solidified at age 16, when she left her home in Johannesburg, South Africa, to become a professional musician.

Together with her European band, Dilana produced and performed hits in parts of the continent, including Holland and Scotland. Later, she settled in Houston, Texas, as a solo act.

"In some ways it can be lonely," she said about life away from her family. "You can stand in a room full of people and yet feel alone, but it depends on the people you surround yourself with."

Proud to call herself a gypsy, the well-traveled rocker speaks fluent English, Dutch and her native African language.

An adventurous streak, it seems, not only attracted Dilana to riding Harleys but, most importantly, developed her eclectic taste in music. "It's hard to say one particular thing," she said of her musical preferences. "Whatever the style... as long as I feel intensity."

Among the artists Dilana said she admires are Janis Joplin, Stevie Nicks, System of A Down, Led Zeppelin and AC/DC.

As to how long she intends to make music, the answer was quick: "Till the day I die—I'm going to be the female Johnny Cash."

Final name: Rock Star Supernova

LOS ANGELES — A southern California punk bank has settled with the CBS reality show "Rock Star: Supernova" over the use of the Supernova band name.

Under the agreement, announced last week, the punk band will keep its original name and the TV band will be known as "Rock Star Supernova."

The original Supernova, which recorded three albums under the name starting in 1991, sued CBS, the show's participants and Mark Burnett Productions in June claiming unfair competition and trademark infringement.

"Rock Star: Supernova" began airing July 5, with 15 contestants.

The winner, Lukas Rossi, named on the show's final episode, is expected to tour with the band—Rock Star Supernova, that is—and appear on its album. The group's first performance is scheduled for New Year's Eve in Las Vegas.

AP

'Il Mare' was here

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

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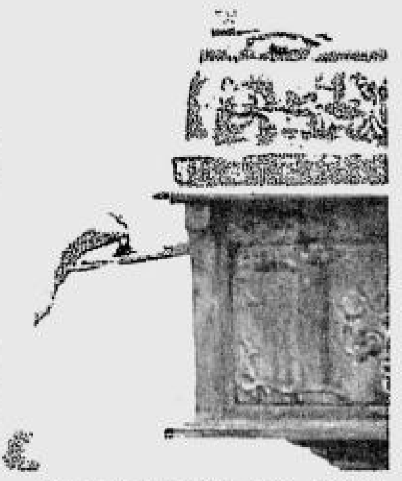
JI-HYUN Jun in "Il Mare"



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